



Newsletter
Northwest Indiana Section 1011
P.O. Box 705 Griffith, IN 46319

November/December 2003

Mission Statement

ASQ – NWI Section 1011 seeks to align the diverse skills of its members into a high-performance team committed to the advancement of quality in personal, professional, and social contexts by providing opportunities to acquire relevant knowledge through social programs, training sessions, and formal instruction.

From the Editor:

Happy Holidays to Everyone!

I'd like to get started by welcoming all of our new members to the section – Marlene Cochran, James Radford, Paula Rosenbaum, Kelly Spearson, Paul Roznawski and Casey Schuetz-Weitzel. Let's all keep an eye out for these individuals at upcoming events and make our newest additions feel welcome.

The Section Executive Committee is in the process of developing a series of refresher seminars. Instead of offering a refresher course for a specific certification, we would like to offer individual classes geared to a specific topic area instead. There are still many details to be worked out, but we are currently looking for people who would be willing to donate a few hours of their time, on a single Saturday, to teach a single topic area from a certification body of knowledge. If a decent amount of volunteers come forth, these classes would be offered for a minimal charge (or FREE!), which would greatly reduce the cost of a refresher course for our section members. So, if you are or think you may be interested, please contact any board member.

As always, articles are needed for the newsletter. If you have a specific area of expertise within the quality arena, a quality related story you would like to share, or even an opinion on a quality topic that you feel may be beneficial or interesting to your fellow members – get it on paper and submit it for publication in the newsletter!

Jennifer Hendricks



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Section Meeting

How to Outlive Your Wife

Thursday, 20 Nov 2003

6:00 – 8:00

Rodney's Sports Bar and Grill
(2833 Highway Avenue, Highland, IN, 46322)

Agenda

- 5:00 Meeting Room Open – Cash Bar
- 6:00 – 6:45 Dinner – Buffet Style
- 6:45 – 7:30 Presentation
- 7:30 - 8:00 Networking

Dave Shadinger from the La Porte Hospital will present this interesting topic about dealing with health concerns facing middle-aged males, and the preventive actions that can be taken to live longer and fuller lives.

La Porte Hospital is a recognized leader in providing quality health care. This program is part of their on-going efforts to improve the quality of life health by informing the people in Northwest Indiana of the issues and providing solutions to the problems.

Cost of dinner meeting and presentation: **Free** – register on-line (limited to 50 people)

ISO 9001:2000 – A Story of Certification Success!



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By Keith Poole

In April of this year I started my current employment position, hired specifically to coordinate our company's final efforts towards ISO 9001:2000 certification. Since I joined mid-stream, I had plenty of catching up to do – learning about my brand new employer, the work processes involved, and the tasks completed to date. Looking back, I think my fresh set of eyes came at a good time and helped us along in our journey. The drive to certification was almost two years in the making and faced inevitable slowdowns when obstacles in the road presented themselves. Certification is hard enough for any company – but how about one that doesn't actually make anything?

Our company is not your typical manufacturing environment. Our unusual situation thankfully allowed us to exclude clause 7.6 – Control of monitoring and measuring devices, but also presented unique challenges. At our company, production of the few end products we provide to customers are outsourced, as are packaging and delivery. The process outputs are intangible and consist of services, support, administration, and data files. Identification of outsourced processes – and our control over them – was important to include in our quality system manual.

When I joined, the creation of our quality system manual was already underway but it did not really reflect our business as a whole. It was lacking one of the most important requirements specified by the ISO 9001:2000 standard – identification of processes and their interactions. Satisfying this requirement turned out to be real eye-opener for everyone, including senior management. As such, I think construction of a compliant quality system manual is a worthwhile task for every company to undertake – even if you are not considering certification. I kept hearing again and again the phrase, “No one has ever done this before.” As is the case for most companies, ours has changed so much over the last ten years that even those who have been here all along hardly recognize it. Most people have no idea what takes place in other departments. The quality system manual is now much more than an overview of our company or a promotional piece for customers; it is truly a map of the company and its functions, and is useful for every employee to read. Completing the manual took considerable effort to gather input from all departments, organize it into the applicable sections of the manual, and finally revise and clarify text. I coordinated its compilation, but most of the content was obtained from interviewing department members actually performing the work. To guide the traffic flow of information, a conscious decision was made early on to utilize a structure comprised of mentors and champions.

The mentors were (with the exception of one) members of the quality department and all were trained in ISO 9001:2000 and capable of answering questions and taking a hands-on approach with departments when needed. Each mentor had responsibility for several champions, each appointed (most volunteered) for a major functional area. In addition to their own areas, some champions had responsibility for functions separate from but related to their regular duties. This mentor / champion structure worked very well since it gave everyone a clear “point person” to go to for help with process definition and documentation.



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This process definition and documentation made up the majority of the effort towards compliance with the standard. In keeping with the spirit of ISO 9001:2000, we discouraged unnecessary documentation but required it where it was most needed. Many first drafts of standard operating procedures were merged with others to reduce the overall amount of documentation. A much-repeated communication was that not all processes need to be documented, but they do need to be defined and process doers need to be aware and perform processes consistently. In many cases, properly completed records at the end of a process were sufficient evidence that a defined process was consistently being followed.

Armed with our SOPs, records, quality system manual, and a newly defined internal audit process, we were ready for a pre-assessment audit by our registrar. Our only nonconformance from this audit was that our quality system manual still did not adequately describe our processes, and more importantly the interactions between them. Our VP of Quality took this on as her personal mission and made the final drive to map our company processes a glowing success! Her commitment brought all of senior management on board.

Management buy-in truly crystallized during the month between pre-assessment and certification audits. This was later than ideal, but I think our success at the first external audit showed senior management that we were really serious about this effort, and that we were ready for certification. Our last step to prepare for the certification audit was to train these executives in our quality management system, and give them the tools and props to answer audit questions with confidence.

Before we knew it, the month was up and the certification audit was upon us. Our company was recommended for certification to the ISO 9001:2000 standard with only a few minor nonconformances and several opportunities for improvement. Success! Now it is time for those of us in the quality department to heed our own words when asked about certification – it is not the end, but rather the beginning of our continual improvement journey.

SPC - gone with the wind?

By Paul Stoudt

I remember in the late eighties and early nineties, SPC was big. Now you don't hear as much about it and I've talked to other quality professionals and they talk like its passé. There still is a need to keep control of processes and identify changes in the process, so SPC can't be antiquated. So why has its perceived importance faded out? Well, I can only speak from my own experience.

Ten years ago, my plant ran 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Operators use to test the various parameters of our product and plotted the results on the SPC chart. Operators knew what the SPC chart was telling them. They knew that there was only a 1 in 200 chance that a test result would randomly be out of the control limits and there was a greater chance that some assignable cause was influencing this result. Operators understood the improbability of having 8 consecutive points above or below the average and they knew that 7 consecutive points in an upward or downward trend meant something. When any of these conditions existed, operators notified the appropriate personnel and the problem was corrected before nonconformity existed.

QA entered test results into a database called dBase. Then Microsoft Access came along. Access was more user friendly and was easier to install on computers. By installing terminals at each workstation, my facility was able to go paperless. Operators were able to enter test results directly into the database and this relieved QA of the task. Management was able to reduce personnel in QA.

Because Access didn't have any statistical capability, online SPC was eliminated. It was up to QA to copy and paste the data into an Excel spreadsheet and do a statistical analysis of the data. Now, if some adverse change entered our process, test results would still be in spec, but, questionable material would run all day, or all weekend, before QA would notice a change in the data. Because the product was still in specification, we would still ship it out and the customer would be receiving material that performed differently than what he was used to getting.

I suggested that operators enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet so that we could keep our online SPC. This got rejected because we needed to send COA's to customers and Excel can't generate COA's. I then suggested that the operators enter the data into an Excel spreadsheet and I'll copy and paste the data into Access. Initially, this was rejected because an extra step would be added and the whole point of going paperless was to reduce steps. But, after a few episodes of running questionable product, I got my way.

I had the operators enter the data into the Excel spreadsheet, but to my disappointment, the charts didn't update as test results were being entered. I tried various experiments to get the charts to update, but none worked. I thought about the operators updating the charts themselves after every test, but this was adding extra steps and the data entry wasn't going to be user friendly for the operators. So I still didn't have online SPC, and we ended up going back to Access anyway.



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Sending material that was effected by adverse causes in our process became such common practice; nobody cared about the assignable causes anymore. As long as the product met “specification”, it was good product. “Acceptable” quality replaced “optimum” quality. After awhile, production lost the meaning of SPC altogether. When material tested out of spec, it no longer raised any red flags, nobody questioned why we had an out of spec situation, instead the question was, “What needed to be done to get it in spec?”

Even though QA is aware of the value of statistical analysis, without production operators using SPC charts, they don’t have any awareness of its value. My whole frustration lies in producing electronic charts that update as test results are being entered. I’ve looked at SPC Pak, QDS, and Mini Tab, but none of them can do what I need them to do.

Our customers have gotten used to receiving product of variable performance, just like we have gotten used to receiving raw material inconsistent with previous lots. It’s obvious our vendors make no effort to keep their processes under control, either.

Are You Getting The Maximum Benefit From Your ASQ Membership?

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do you have 10 years active professional experience? (Combined with education)
2. Have you been an ASQ member in good standing for the past year?
3. Have you contributed to professional continuous improvement by one of the following:
 - a. Conducting quality related engineering, inspection or audit, statistical work, or application of quality principles in a professional environment for atleast two years.
 - b. Teaching quality or related arts or sciences at an accredited institution for atleast two years.
 - c. Currently hold an ASQ certification that requires recertification.

If you answered YES to any of these questions, then advancement to the **GRADE of SENIOR** in ASQ may be the next step in furthering your professional status.

For more information, visit the ASQ website or contact your local chapter examiner, Milt Krivokuca at Milton.Krivokuca@Davenport.edu or 219-613-4574.

Take your professional career to the next step by exploring the benefits of becoming an ASQ **SENIOR GRADE!**



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Spread the Word about Quality and ASQ

Sections are one of the most valued benefits of ASQ membership. In addition to having the opportunity to network with fellow quality professionals in the Northwest Indiana section, you may also reach out to people in your community who are not members and encourage them to find out what ASQ is about. Invite a colleague to our section meeting as a guest and share what you find valuable about membership. Section members can contribute to growing the quality community!

Each One Reach One, ASQ's member-get-a-member program, provides an opportunity to gain recognition both for individual members and sections. Individuals can potentially win an ASQ Quality Press gift certificate for new member referrals, and sections will also be recognized for recruitment efforts.

For individuals, members who recruit new members are entered into a drawing each month for a gift certificate. In addition, the individual who recruits the most members in one month will be rewarded. There is also a year-end recognition with several prizes including an Annual Quality Congress trip. For sections as a whole, ASQ will call out recruitment performance and recognize it. For example, in April 2003, the top recruiters of new members were the International Chapter with 33 and the Toronto and Puerto Rico Sections with 25. Support the quality profession and get our section recognized!

To request an Each One Reach One brochure, contact ASQ at 800-248-1946 or cs@asq.org, and ask for item number B0132. You may also visit ASQ.org to find out more. If you have any questions, please contact Traci Blom at tblom@asq.org.



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