

Jan/ Feb/Mar 2009

The American Society for Quality is an international organization that advances individual, organizational and community excellence world-wide through

- Learning
- Quality Improvement, and
- Knowledge Exchange

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Aloha Quality Network



ASQ Section 0623 Hawaii Election of Officers

Martha asked me to serve as the nominating chair for this election, and a dedicated group of members joined my committee to develop a slate. Our current section policy is to elect for a 2 year term, and so the officers elected will serve from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011. The section will be electing its officers this May at the scheduled membership meeting.

If there are any members that would also like to be on that slate in any of the positions except for Chair (Karen is moving up from the chair-elect position), please e-mail me by

May 3rd and I will include you on the ballot. We will also take nominations from the floor at that May meeting, but if you would like to run for any position, I ask that you let me know via email so that I can prepare the ballot. At this time, the chair elect position is vacant.

Thanks to the section members who have volunteered for the slate. If there is additional interest in any of these positions, please let me know by e-mailing me at glenn.hamamura@gmail.com by May 3rd

- Chair: Karen Fong
- Chair-Elect:
- Vice Chair: Eugene Young
- Secretary: Stephanie Lum
- Treasurer: John Thompson



The Quality Manager in a Down Economy

In this down economy every organization has to take a serious look at everything they do. It's survival mode for many organizations. One question you might be asked is "what value do you bring to the organization?" In these difficult times every individual, every action, every initiative has to be justified for the value that they add. If you don't add value, you're gone.

What value does a quality management professional bring to the table, or what value should you bring? What

is the role of the quality professional anyway? Regardless of the economy, the quality professional should play a critical role in the success of any organization.

The quality professional brings a set of skills that are needed for an organization to succeed: specialized training and education in quality management practices, statistical and analytical methods and project management practices. But while these skills are specialized, they are widely

available and in and of themselves they are not justification for you to take up valuable space in an organization. A down economy being an employer's market, these skills become a commodity that is subject to price competition. And that competition is not in your favor. These skills can also be found in the outsource market. When quality professionals find themselves unemployed they suddenly

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Tool of the Quarter—Nominal Group Technique Voting

By Larry Sue, Sr. ASQ Member

Why Use It?

This tool is intended to enable a team to come to a consensus on the relative importance of issues, problems, or solutions by including individual importance rankings into a team's final priorities.

What Does It Do?

- Builds commitment to a team's choice of priorities through equal participation in the process
- Allows each team member to rank the issues without being pressured by others
- Puts team members who tend to be quieter on an equal footing with more dominant members
- Makes the team consensus visible; the major causes of disagreement can then be discussed

How Do I Do It?

1. Generate the list of issues, problems, or solutions to be prioritized. In a new team, some members may not be accustomed to team participation. In these situations, it may feel safer to do written, silent brainstorming.
2. Write the statements on a flipchart or board.
3. Eliminate duplicates and clarify the meanings of any of the statements. The team leader should always ask for the team's permission and guidance when changing statements.
4. Record the final list of statements on a flipchart or board. Example: Why does the hospital have dissatisfied customers? A. Poor communication between the hospital and insurance companies B. Staff members not trained properly C. Parking lot attendants not nice to customers D. Failure to provide assistance in a timely manner E. Misrepresentation of products and services
5. Each team member records the corresponding letters on a piece of paper and rank orders the statements. Example: Kanoe's sheet of paper looks like this: A = 4 B = 5 C = 3 D = 1 E = 2 In this example, "5" is the most important ranking and "1" is the least important.

Combine the rankings of all team members

	Kanoe	Lani	Kimo	Joseph	Maile	Total
A	4	5	2	2	1	14
B	5	4	5	3	5	22
C	3	1	3	4	4	15
D	1	2	1	5	2	11
E	2	3	4	1	3	13

B - "Staff members not trained properly" would be the highest priority. The team would work on this first, and then move through the rest of the list as needed.

Items that are ranked close together can be discussed by the group with subsequent rankings done on each sub-set of items as needed.





The processes must be designed with quality in mind and quality built into them. A process isn't designed to perform a task and then have a quality check built into them. A process is designed so that quality is an inherent part of it and that the person performing it is responsible for the quality of its output.



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discover the entrepreneur within and begin offering their technical skills services on the open market.

So how do you differentiate yourself and bring the value to your organization that is needed to weather the current storm? You need to become the quality professional of the future. In reality that's the same quality professional that you should already be, but it makes for better writing to say the quality professional of the future.

The quality professional brings that special set of skills and knowledge, but they need to go beyond that. The quality professional must be an integral part of the business, not an add-on function or a distinct department. This means that the quality professional must understand the whole business, not just a narrow slice and not just the "quality" piece. If you're performing "quality tasks", such as gathering and analyzing data, you're not maximizing your contribution, and that means you're a target for elimination.

The quality professional is a leader in the quest for business process excellence. Business process excellence means creating processes that move the organization forward towards achieving its defined goals. For an organization to

achieve its goals, all its processes must move the organization towards those goals. Everything the organization does is a process, so everything should align with the defined goals. All processes must be designed well so that they are efficient and effective. Everyone performing the processes must understand not only how to perform them, but why. The processes must be designed with quality in mind and quality built into them. A process isn't designed to perform a task and then have a quality check attached to it as a separate process. A process is designed so that quality is an inherent part of it and that the person performing it is responsible for the quality of its output.

The quality professional brings their skills, knowledge, and training into the design of the process and the training of the process operator. They imbed their knowledge into the process and into the operator, rather than being the keeper of the knowledge. That might make some people fearful. They might think that giving up their knowledge makes them less valuable and no longer needed. The opposite is true. An organization is constantly changing, which means that its processes are constantly changing. The quality professional who can facilitate change by designing new processes, and imbedding

their knowledge into the process and the operator, is an asset that is extremely valuable.

Become a leader in the quest for business process excellence. Share your skills and knowledge to design improved processes that incorporate quality as an integral part of the process. Train the process operators to execute the process so that the output meets specifications; and train them so they know what to do if the process produces output that doesn't meet specifications. Become a business professional, not just a quality professional.

Steve Novak

President

PPR Management Services

www.pprmanagementservices.com



Ten Tips to Make Change Work for You

Jeff Oltmann on Mastering Projects

You can't avoid change

Customers change their minds. Competitors zig instead of zagging. Technology advances. Change is constant, and prohibiting it on projects does not work. In *Flexible Product Development*, Preston Smith asks, "Is a frozen specification simply fiction?" Citing thirteen years of data collection by Donald Reinertsen at Cal Tech, Smith concludes, "It is not that specifications seldom remain constant during development; it is that they never do. The concept of a frozen requirement is a complete fiction in the real world." [Smith, p.13]

You can't prevent changes to your projects, but allowing rampant uncontrolled change dooms projects. Is there a solution to this dilemma?

Make change valuable

In *The New Project Management*, J. Davidson Frame points out that change can be valuable. [Frame, p.48] Companies that react flexibly and quickly can take advantage of market shifts, new technologies, and changing customer desires, giving them an advantage over their slower, less flexible competitors.

To make change valuable, provide two complementary things to your projects:

1. A structure that replaces chaos with explicit decisions about changes
2. Enough flexibility to take advantage of necessary or good changes

In the rest of this article, I share some tips for each of these.

Just enough structure

A minimal change management structure requires three things: a baseline, a simple change control protocol, and excellent stakeholder management skills.

1-Baseline

You must have a clear initial baseline even to begin to manage changes. Without it, you have no basis to detect potential changes, analyze whether the benefit is worth the cost, and negotiate who will pay for what. Document the baseline with clear requirements, specifications, or use cases, as well as a work breakdown structure.

2-Change Control Protocol

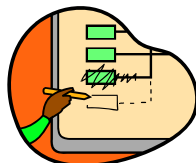
This allows you to make well-considered decisions about possible change. It doesn't have to be complicated or burdensome. Don't rubber stamp each change request. Make sure you understand its cost (not necessarily in monetary terms) and its value to the program and business.

3-Great stakeholder management skills

Most changes have consequences, but stakeholders shy away from the hard trade offs that come with managing changes. Manage stakeholder expectations carefully. Use the triple constraint—Development Cost, Development Time and Features—to hold a conversation with your stakeholders about the costs and benefits of proposed changes.

The tradeoff conversation is often difficult. Pinto and Kharbanda list tradeoff avoidance as one of the twelve biggest ways to make a project fail. They say, "Hard decisions are the perquisite of project management. Uninformed decisions, however are its bane." [Pinto, p. 51] See my earlier column *The Impossible Dream* for more details on having these conversations.

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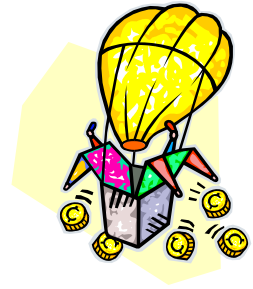


Ten Tips to make change work for you (continued)

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Sufficient Flexibility

The change management structure discussed above is helpful, but how do you stay flexible?



4– Roll with the punches

The simplest way to increase flexibility is an attitude change. Remember that the plan is not cast in concrete—be prepared to abandon or modify it when changed circumstances dictate.

5– Divide and conquer

Break projects into small chunks, each of which delivers something that demonstrably works. Reassess at the end of each chunk. Is the project still on the right course? Have critical things changed? What work should be next?

6– Make waves

In turbulent environments, the future beyond a short horizon is just too fuzzy to plan with great accuracy. Use *rolling wave planning* to match the level of planning detail to the amount of certainty about each phase of the program.

Start by creating a plan that covers the entire project, but add a crucial twist: make near term plans very detailed, but plan for the later portions of the project at a higher level. As the project moves forward, move the detailed planning window forward, too. F.L. Harrison first described rolling wave planning in 1981. Since then, it has been incorporated into the iterative and agile approaches that are popular in software projects.

7– Specify carefully

Specify early requirements at a high level, rather than spending energy tying down all the details. Focus those high-level specifications on desired *results*, rather than on *methods*. For example, HP's original DeskJet printer revolutionized home printing in 1988. The three requirements for it were simply "Laser quality print on plain paper for under \$1000," which allowed a breakthrough shift from dot matrix to ink jet technology. A detailed "how-to" spec would have resulted in a mundane product using the same tired old dot-matrix technology.

8– Anticipate

Know your customer or user better than they know themselves, so you can anticipate what they need. Smith says, "Seek to anticipate change in the customer environment by finding ways to stay close to your customers and thus appreciate their trends in using your products." [Smith, p. 55] A variation of this tip is to use early prototypes and mock ups to help your customer discover what they really want or need. Anticipation is hard up front work, but it can pay off in the end.

9– Favor modularity

Where possible, use a modular product architecture, so you can respond to changes during design rapidly and at low cost. Isolating the effects of the changes to one or two modules.

10-Be loose and tight

According to Milosevic, et.al., change management should begin "as soon as the requirements are developed." [Milosevic, p.230] However, change management has overhead, both in direct monetary costs and in friction that reduces flexibility and slows projects. Therefore, use "loose" change controls early in the project, when things are changing rapidly. Focus on changes that have the biggest consequences.

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THE NEWSLETTER OF ASQ HAWAII

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THIS YEAR'S PRESENTATIONS ARE
 NOW AVAILABLE AS A RESOURCE IN
 THE MEMBERS ONLY SECTION OF OUR
 WEBSITE!

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As the project progresses, the consequences of ill-advised changes outweigh the additional cost of tighter change control. At this point, tighten up the degree of change control. Tightening may include putting lower level details under change control, and using a formal change control board that involves more people across organizations in the decisions process.

Endpoint

Change is constant and relentless. To succeed, your projects must combine just enough change management structure to prevent chaos, while simultaneously enabling sufficient flexibility to take advantage of valuable changes. Recently one of my students offered this memorable summary "Semper Gumby—always be flexible, but never break."

Further reading

[Smith] Preston Smith, *Flexible Product Development*, Jossey-Bass, 2007

[Frame] J. Davidson Frame, *The New Project Management*, 2nd edition. Jossey-Bass, 2002

[Pinto] Jeffrey Pinto and Om Kharbada, *How to Fail in Project Management (without really trying)*, Business Horizons, July-August 1996

[Milosevic] Milosevic, Martinelli, and Waddell, *Program Management for Improved Business Results*, Wiley, 2007