

The Journal for

Quality and Participation

People | Pride | Performance

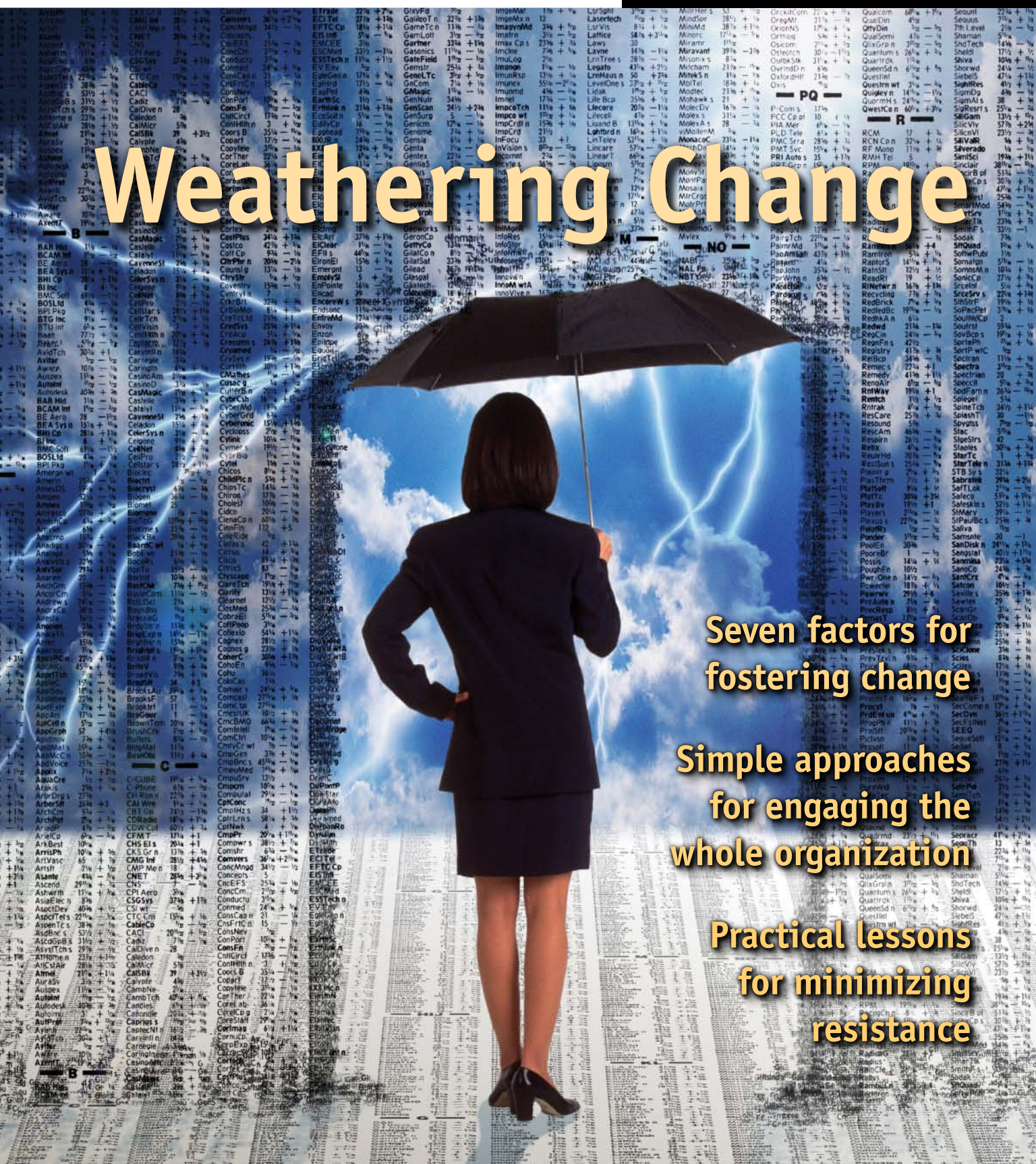
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Weathering Change

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Simple approaches for engaging the whole organization

Practical lessons for minimizing resistance





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The Global Voice of Quality™

Editor's Notebook

An Imperfect Storm

Have you ever wondered whether it is easier to lead change when your organization is facing times of great success or significant pressure? I've heard debaters on this topic on many occasions, and I've come to the conclusion that there is no ideal set of environmental circumstances that pave the way for making change easier.

By its very nature, the need to change is a result—the outcome of shifts in a variety of factors that influence the organization's performance. Failure to respond to the confluence of new circumstances puts the organization at risk—in some cases, the ultimate risk of extinction. As Freud is sometimes quoted, "Insanity is continuing to do things the same way and expecting different results." The organization's current state of performance has virtually no influence on the timing or extent of those changing factors, which leads to the inevitable conclusion that organizations must be ready to change at all times, demonstrating an immense capability to be responsive and adaptive.

Of course, this reality doesn't make the change process any easier. Even when the need for change appears to be obviously critical to organizational viability, the actual process of change requires

numerous individuals with highly divergent needs and perspectives to align their efforts and move forward in unity.

Much like changes in the weather, some changes fit well with our personal viewpoints and will be welcomed as the shift from winter to spring and summer. Other changes will rub against our comfort zones and feel as unwanted as a severe hurricane. The very same change will garner a variety of reactions, which leaders will have to address to ensure success. Leading change is not an assignment for the faint-hearted, but we have much research and practice available to help guide the effort.

I'm reminded of Sebastian Junger's book, *The Perfect Storm*, which recounts the true story of a fishing crew that got caught in the Halloween Gale of 1991. Multiple weather patterns converged to create a deadly squall, requiring enormous effort and bravery from the crew members. I doubt, however, that anyone associated with this story considered the storm to be perfect—just the storm that they had to face.

Times of change are the result of imperfect storms—unplanned and often unwanted situations, and our reactions to them usually are imperfect, too. They are, however, essential to sustainability, and that makes the effort very worthwhile.

Deborah Hoppen

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Analogies apt in one context may not work as well in others. I think your main point was that individual actions matter and can bring about a major change when aggregated—which I agree with—but, although not looking to undermine that general philosophy, I think it's important to look at another interpretation and also see how that story might play from a quality perspective—especially given its appearance in an ASQ publication.

It could be seen as a classic case of well-intended but ineffective problem solving—reacting to a situation before it is well understood or the need (if any) defined. I am certainly no marine biologist, but shouldn't the first question be whether a starfish washed up on a beach is a situation that even needs fixing? Perhaps it is at the end of its life cycle, and this is just a sign of that. Perhaps by throwing it back in the water (even assuming the animal can tolerate that kind of

acceleration—presumably something its physiology was never expecting) the “good Samaritan” is disrupting the natural order of things, for example, depriving a sea bird of food. I assume there are many other possibilities that would support leaving it where it is. So, the whole “it matters to that one” conclusion seems like a convenient anthropomorphic story-telling stretch to support a feel-good outcome for the Eiseley/Barker audiences.

In the quality profession we are taught the importance of systems thinking. Without taking all this too seriously, I think the endearing tale about starfish could equally serve as a classic example of the uninformed assuming a “Just Do It” applied when perhaps some more information/knowledge would have clarified what, if anything, was actually needed. Ecosystems thinking!

Best regards,
Chris Hansen

Seven core factors are key to counteracting the frequently encountered pitfalls to change management.

Keeping Change on Track

Richard Bevan

It's rare to find a business leader who is not involved with planning or managing a change process of some kind. Whether major (a plant shutdown, merger, installation of a new IT system) or on a smaller-scale (engagement of a new leader, sales force reorganization, new compensation plans), change can raise questions and concerns, present operational challenges, and impose demands on time and resources. The cost of managing the process may increase greatly if attention is diverted from day-to-day work with customers and prospects.

We often see significant changes implemented with scant attention to identifying and addressing the challenges it may create among those involved, the questions it will raise, and the issues and needs it will generate. As a result, many change efforts stumble, and some fail entirely. For example, Peter Senge states that two-thirds or more of total quality management (TQM) programs and reengineering initiatives fail.¹ John Kotter noted that few of the companies he studied were successful in making major changes to their ways of doing business.²

A simple series of questions will enable you to assess quickly where the process is going well and where it might need strengthening. These questions assess the status of the change initiative

in relation to a set of seven core factors typically present in successful change.

Before reviewing those factors and the questions we will briefly consider the nature of change within organizations and the reason that—more often than not—the process doesn't run entirely smoothly.

Why Is Change So Often a Challenge?

The characteristics and processes that predict effective adaptation to change have been defined and described by many leaders, researchers, writers, and educators. At its most basic, effective management of change requires leaders to be very clear about the purpose and the process; seek input and information from those involved and affected; deploy sufficient resources to manage the transition without losing focus on day-to-day business processes; and maintain an effective multi-directional flow of communication and information.

The attributes are straightforward, readily implemented, and perhaps considered self-evident. Most people manage change continually: at home, in recreation and volunteer activity, and at work. They have an intuitive understanding of what needs to happen if change is to move forward. Even if they haven't consciously thought about or

documented the principles, they do what makes sense. They consult people, discuss the alternatives, try to anticipate and plan around the obstacles, adapt their plans as needed, get on with it, and address issues and challenges along the way.

Yet when organizations implement change, these straightforward needs are often missed. The intent and the broad strategy get the attention; the details of execution are forgotten. We repeatedly see change initiatives within organizations stumble and sometimes fail entirely. We see participants in the process who are unclear about the purpose, the impact, and their role. We see insufficient resources assigned to much-needed systems changes or to prepare or train people for new roles and behaviors. We see managers and supervisors unable to respond to questions and concerns from their teams.

If the core needs are well known—and perhaps even intuitive—why does change within the organization so often present such challenges and run into difficulties? Part of the reason is that leaders and sponsors of change initiatives already face a heavy workload and multiple initiatives and activities. They rely on the so-called “memo and conference call approach” and assign far too few resources to managing the process of transition.

Significant change calls for proportionately significant effort and resources: for planning, communicating, training, and many other activities. In some cases, and especially where there is resistance to the change, the process of persuasion, engagement, and adoption calls for continuing time and commitment from managers at all levels. Initiating change will likely create a complex and extensive set of issues, questions, and unresolved concerns. These, in turn, create the need for a continuing and demanding process of explaining, discussing, persuading, and planning.

Many years of working with change provided opportunities to generate a substantial list of the potential pitfalls. We have also seen the tactics, strategies, and processes that provide a positive effect and enable change processes to succeed. These inputs suggest a framework of characteristics or attributes that can guide successful management of change. Of course, no single element in this framework—or even several of them—can guarantee a successful outcome. The absence of even one will certainly lead to difficulties, and absence of more than one will cause the challenges to grow exponentially.

For example, change rarely succeeds without a clear awareness of purpose and process. People need to understand why the change is needed, how it will be accomplished, their role in the process, and what it means for them at an individual level.

Case History: Anticipate the Issues and Plan the Response

A medical-equipment company was expanding quickly by internal growth as well as through acquisitions. The announcement about consolidating into a single new Midwest plant (from several locations in the United States and Mexico) raised many questions and concerns across the organization.

Would people lose their jobs or face relocation? How would the organization retain expertise and apply it in the new plant? Was the change motivated by cost reduction and, if so, what other approaches were explored? What impact would this have on production cycles, product lines, and development teams? How would this affect pay and other conditions?

A transition steering group was asked to develop the implementation plan. As the leader commented, “There wasn’t much source information for us. The board made the decision based on a presentation from the planning team. They talked about industry economics and financial implications but didn’t get into the implications for the organization and our people—how we would actually get this done. And the rationale hadn’t been summarized in a clear and concise way.”

The team interviewed key executives for brief outlines of purpose, rationale, process, and implementation steps. They conducted research among employees and other stakeholders (including customers) to explore and understand their reactions to the planned changes and the implications.

The resulting database of questions, issues, and ideas provided the raw material for developing responses and action plans. The implementation plan was built on this foundation, including activities to address training needs, manager support, alignment of reward systems, communication programs and processes, and many other actions in support of the change.

The research jump-started planning, identified major issues to address, and clarified priorities. It provided a clear starting point and foundation for implementation planning. Follow-up research

in specific areas and functions evolved into a key change-management tool.

Some of the Pitfalls

Change is often imposed without advance assessment of the issues, questions, concerns, and ideas of the stakeholders—those most involved and most able to influence the outcome. Yet if questions remain unanswered and concerns unaddressed, employees may be distracted and distressed. This carries a high potential cost. How often have we experienced the frustration of dealing with a distracted employee in a business providing a product or service? Very often, a poorly managed change process lies behind that negative customer experience.

Even if change efforts are well planned and executed, those involved and affected will ask questions and analyze purpose and implications. This is especially true if they haven't been involved in the planning. "They never consulted me," is a common refrain, and it will slow down the process and create challenges and additional workload for line managers. Acknowledging the level and nature of concerns and questions and building a degree of involvement can also provide insight and information about how best to manage the process. The energy and focus of employees, frequently encountered as a challenge or obstacle, can be harnessed and turned into a powerful tool for change.

Following are a few of the pitfalls that cause change to get off track:

- *Ineffective or missing business case:* Managers communicate a case for change that is unrealistic or incomplete; it isn't readily understood. Here is one of many areas where a robust, concise business case document is invaluable.
- *Costs not recognized:* The costs of implementing and supporting change are not planned for or adequately acknowledged. Resources need to be allocated, workloads adjusted, and responsibilities reassigned.
- *Systems not aligned:* Existing processes and systems (e.g., rewards, training, and information) don't support the new model. Change ripples across many areas and functions, and these need to be aligned with the new direction.
- *Limited and one-directional communication:* Leaders expect to persuade and inform by one-way communication. Audiences have limited

Webinar: A Fresh Look at Managing Change

It is ironic that most of us know intuitively how to manage change—be clear about purpose, listen effectively, involve those affected, and communicate continuously—yet somehow many change initiatives falter or fail. In part, it's because attention is paid to the strategic need for change, and the broad solution; but too few resources are applied to execution, to actually getting it done.

In this webinar, the author of *Changemaking: Tactics and Resources for Managing Organizational Change* will provide background on the challenge of change, set out a simple framework to guide planning for change, and provide ideas and guidance about how to deploy it. Richard Bevan will also cover the following topics:

- Insights into the reasons change efforts succeed or fail.
- Approaches to assess the status of a change initiative that is in progress.
- Key factors in successful change, including strategic clarity, stakeholder engagement, and sustained communication.

To learn more about this webinar, go to <http://www.asq.org/pub/jqp>.

opportunity to ask questions, offer ideas, or engage in discussion about the changes.

- *Line management support not built:* Line managers don't support the direction and approach. They share the uncertainty and concerns of employees and need to be informed, persuaded, and engaged.
- *Lack of insight into stakeholder issues:* Leaders assume they know what people think. They fail to identify key concerns and obstacles. They need to listen informally, and at an institutional level, to the questions and concerns of stakeholders and (most importantly) to their ideas.
- *Minimal involvement:* Input, questions, and ideas aren't recorded and documented. As a result, responses and tactics don't reflect the needs. A continually revised FAQ document, available online, can be of great value.

- *Success assumed:* Leaders make a premature assumption of success and fail to follow up, support, and drive continuing change.

Awareness of these and other pitfalls doesn't ensure success, but it does provide ideas about where change most often gets off track and opportunities to implement course corrections. Each pitfall has a positive counterpart—a proactive measure to support and facilitate change.

Core Factors in Successful Change Management

These seven factors summarize the conditions, resources, and processes that support successful change.

- *Clarity.* Be clear and unambiguous about the purpose of the change, its direction, and the approach.
- *Engagement.* Build a sense of ownership, belonging, and commitment; consult with and involve the people who will be affected by the change.
- *Resources.* Put the needed resources in place (e.g., financial, human, and technical) to enable the change.
- *Alignment.* Ensure that systems and processes (e.g., rewards, information, accounting, and training) support the change.
- *Leadership.* Guide, train, and equip leaders at every level so that they display consistent commitment to the change.
- *Communication.* Facilitate an effective two-way flow of information; be aware of issues and questions; provide timely responses.
- *Tracking:* Establish clear goals; assess progress against these; adjust and fine-tune as necessary.

The set of factors listed here aligns with models and frameworks developed and applied by many writers, educators, and leaders. These include John Kotter² and Daryl Conner,³ as well as Kurt Lewin,⁴ one of the earliest commentators on change and still fully relevant. The challenge doesn't lie in understanding the process, or even in putting together an effective plan: it's in putting the plan into action and sustaining the effort.

Making It Happen

"Everyone knows you have to do these things" is a frequent comment when the elements of successful change management are outlined. When we ask if those elements have been put into practice, it often turns out that perhaps some of

the details were overlooked; maybe most of the details; sometimes, all of them. In many change initiatives, large-scale and small, at least one of the core principles (and, typically, several of them) is not followed.

Senior leaders often say of their employees, "They're smart; they'll figure it out." Yes, they are indeed smart. They figure out that the direction isn't clear and the planning is imperfect. They discover that those leading the initiative, already committed to a heavy workload, have little time to focus on the new task. They figure out that they need a great deal more convincing that this is a change that warrants their involvement.

The details are what make change work for those whom it impacts most sharply. It's hard work to make a significant additional effort while continuing to run a complex business, but there's a high price if that effort is not sustained. Employees get distracted and unmotivated; customers' needs get ignored or forgotten; and questions, issues, concerns, and distractions consume managers.

Change can happen without all seven core factors in place, but it's likely to be difficult, expensive, and painful—for your customers as well as your employees.

A Simple Assessment Framework

The questions below can be asked and answered informally, in a series of conversations or discussions with those involved, or more formally—for example, through an online survey of stakeholders. They provide a means of quickly assessing status and key issues, with the negative items offering a guide to where attention is needed to keep the process on track.

At the least, the areas of concern offer direction for additional research and study. The data can serve as a primary driver of planning. The issues and questions you uncover in the research process will determine the activities (including communication, process support, and training) that form your tactics for redirection.

Following are the assessment questions—two for each factor, one primary and one secondary or follow-up—together with some examples of tactics that support positive outcomes.

- *Clarity.* Are the purpose, direction, and approach defined and documented clearly? Are these understood and accepted by key stakeholder groups?

- *Engagement.* Have you engaged individuals and groups who can influence the outcome by involving them in the process? If so, have you acknowledged their input and ideas and applied them to planning and action?
- *Resources.* Are needed resources (e.g., financial, human, and technical) in place and available? Is a strong and effective team ready to lead and guide the change process?
- *Alignment.* Do systems and processes (e.g., rewards, information, accounting, communication, and training) support the change? Have you identified, developed, and implemented needed changes to these systems?
- *Leadership.* Are leaders at all levels of the organization involved in and committed to the change? Do leaders and managers follow up on issues, provide guidance and support, and proactively manage the process?
- *Communication.* Is clear, timely, and complete information available to stakeholders involved in and/or affected by the change? Do these groups and individuals have access to information and a way of providing input and feedback?
- *Tracking.* Are systems in place to assess progress and identify issues to address? Are adjustments implemented as necessary and is information continuing to flow?

Tactics for Supporting the Change Process

The responses to these questions will suggest areas for action and perhaps offer ideas for some of the actions themselves. Ideally, ask the questions in a manner or setting that permits responses that go beyond a simple answer to the question. For example, if they're raised in a discussion led by a team leader, there is an opportunity to ask team members what ideas they have for facilitating, supporting, and driving the change. The result is that awareness of the change process status is complemented with ideas for addressing issues and correcting issues and problems.

Every change is different, but some consistent themes emerge. Following are just a few examples, relating to two of the seven factors, of actions that can support and refresh the change effort.

Clarity

- Develop and distribute a summary document to drive clarity and serve as a reference source on the purpose and process of change.

- Distribute the summary. Use it as a platform on which to build all communication (internal and external) related to the change.
- Create a brief elevator pitch for managers—what's changing and how the transition will be accomplished.
- Develop other tools to assist in the process; for example, a brief PowerPoint® deck for executives and others to use in discussing the changes with their teams.
- Provide managers with talking points and suggested responses to key questions.
- Maintain and manage the summary. Seek input and comment; keep it current, accurate, and complete.
- Provide online access to the current version and enable input, questions, and discussion.

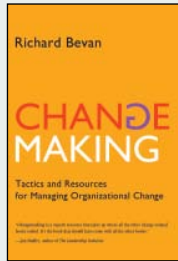
Leadership

- Ensure that the primary sponsor(s) of the change (in some cases, and certainly for major changes such as mergers or acquisitions, this may be the chief executive) is visible, accessible, and driving the process consistently.
- Engage leaders at other levels in planning and implementation; provide guidance and training as needed.
- Encourage leaders to promote behaviors and actions that will support the change.
- Implement processes and activities to maintain leadership engagement—for example, weekly conference calls, regular e-mail bulletins, online forums, blogs and other interactive media, and planning-review meetings.
- Address concerns that leaders may have about their roles and responsibilities in and after the change process; provide guidance, tools, and support.

Manage Change Before It Happens

Many strategies for managing change are not proactive; they focus on the defined period when change is actually occurring. These include the phase following an acquisition, process redesign, division-wide reorganization, or the response to a competitive threat. Such change management efforts often fall short of expectations in terms of accomplishment and employee satisfaction. You can't always create the core factors in successful change at short notice: They need to be in place.

Change Making: Tactics and Resources for Managing Organizational Change



Author: Richard Bevan

Abstract: This book contains information that the author developed during his years of consulting and teaching. It includes guidance ideas, short case studies, and a variety of resources. Amazon.com describes the change issues

addressed by Bevan, "It's ironic that while most people know what conditions need to be in place for effective management of change, these straightforward needs are often missed. The intent gets the attention; the details of execution are forgotten. The elements are simple: listen to the stakeholders, learn about the issues, lead with clarity and involvement, align systems, communicate relentlessly, follow up, and course correct. Consider who will be most affected; ask questions and listen carefully to the responses. This can be on a small, local scale, through informal conversations.

Or it can be on a larger, even corporate-wide scale, through meetings, surveys, social media, focus groups, or a combination of methods. If the most important stakeholder group is employees, ask them what they think about what's happening, what their concerns are, what they need and what they think should be done. You'll learn fast; you'll have answers to your own questions; and you'll have the raw material for a plan to address the issue, solve the problem, or lead the change. And then make it all work through sustained follow-up. Never assume that things will happen as planned. Is the change working? What needs to happen to make it work better? What's working well and what's not? Assess progress; fix it; keep listening, learning, and leading."

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Change comes more readily to the organization that has:

- A clear mission and strategy that guides and informs the goals of teams and individuals.
- Supportive leaders at every level who effectively engage, motivate, and communicate with their teams.
- Employees who are engaged, informed, and involved.

Creating change readiness means managing in a way that encourages engagement, commitment, aspiration, and adaptability. A transition is far more likely to achieve success when the leadership style, work climate, and environment are already receptive to change.

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1. Peter Senge, *The Dance of Change*, Doubleday, 1999.
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Richard Bevan

After early experience in manufacturing management, Richard Bevan worked for Towers Perrin (now Towers Watson) in Europe, Australia, and the United States, including five years leading the firm's worldwide communication consulting practice. In 1995 he started his own firm, C2K Consulting. He was an external faculty member for the University of Washington Executive MBA program where he developed and taught a course in managing change. He currently serves on the board of advisors for ROI Communication and as strategic communication adviser for Elliott Avenue Associates. This article draws on material from his new book Changemaking. Contact Bevan at info@changestart.com.

Are your planned changes tied in knots? Use these simple approaches to enlist the aid of associates who know the behind-the-scenes concerns and can lead from within the ranks.

Corporate Change on a Shoestring Budget

Kenny Moore

The economy's tight. My company no longer has wads of money to throw at high-priced consultants to transform its culture. If change is to happen, it'll have to be done by ordinary employees and on a minuscule budget. Now I'm discovering that I may need to get personally involved. My two-part plan is under way presently. It's cheap and it's fun: two clear signs that senior management won't embrace it, but who cares? With limited financial incentive from my company, I'm learning to look to small pleasures to keep me engaged in the business.

It Starts Small

The first part of the plan all started with Beverly. She works in accounting. She's not the department head. She's not even on our list of "high potential" employees. The fact is, Beverly's a union worker, but she's wonderful. When I have an accounting problem, I go to Bev. When I fall short in following the most recent financial procedure, I go to Bev. On the days I can't get to her, it's

often because there are other befuddled employees seeking her practical wisdom.

Does my company need to reengineer accounting practices to make them more user-friendly and efficient? You bet! Based on my limited experience in dealing with accountants, I know it's unlikely to happen in my lifetime. In the interim, I rely on Beverly.

A Serendipitous Moment

I was in the local dollar store the other day looking for a cheap night-light for my son's bedroom. Wandering down the aisles, I saw a coffee mug engraved with a heart that read: "You're the Greatest." Even though it was hand painted in China, this oriental work of art was available for a mere \$1. The sign said the supply was limited, but I think they still had a few cases in the back room. The cup reminded me of Beverly so I bought it. On the way back to my office, I passed her desk. "I got you a small gift, Bev. A present for all the help you give me." Then I took the cup out and gave it to her.



She smiled. “Even though I don’t drink coffee,” Bev said, “I still love it. I can use it to keep my pens and pencils in.” More than her words, it was the look in her eyes that captivated me. It was a glint of appreciation, a sparkle of affection. A tinge of some positive primordial emotion tethered to the woman’s sacred soul. It was one of those rare moments of divine revelation in the workplace.

Something more was going on here than the exchange of porcelain. Something, I suspect, that was only loosely connected to the fact that the cup was hand painted in the Orient. It was a small moment of acknowledgment for the talent of a lone employee who was making a difference. It represented an undersized deposit into the overdrawn account of employee passion that gets bestowed daily for the sake of the corporate common good. My single regret from the encounter was that there was no high-priced consultant nearby to witness the event.

I now find myself visiting the dollar store regularly and using my small budget to keep the tectonic plates of culture change in steady movement.

It Ends Small

The second part to my grand, but cheap, change plan is to take fellow employees out for a cup of coffee. Not Starbuck’s, since I no longer have the budget for such luxury. We go down to the company cafeteria. It costs me 80 cents. If they want a juice, it’s a dime more. I tend to invite folks who other employees are drawn toward. They represent a type of “heliotropic leadership” in the rugged jungle of business life. They radiate a natural luminescence that nurtures co-workers and causes others to gravitate to them in the workplace. With these folks around, corporate toxicity is kept to a

minimum and a form of workplace photosynthesis takes place.

I spend the first part of these caffeine-laden meetings expressing my appreciation and thanks. It’s odd how seldom people share a personal “thank you” in a corporate setting. The rest of the time is spent in a whimsical conversation about how we might make the company a better place in which to work. I seldom walk away with a detailed action plan. Most of the time, I merely enjoy taking a few minutes out of an otherwise hectic day and squandering it on a person I admire. I’m also darkly reminded how seldom I detach myself from petty complaining and give some thought to creating a positive future. It’s common that these conversations wind up changing me more than the culture. I’m learning that maybe this is exactly what’s needed in these tight financial times. I believe Ben Bernanke and the Federal Reserve would be proud of me.



Kenny Moore

Kenny Moore is co-author of The CEO and the Monk: One Company’s Journey to Profit and Purpose, rated as one of the top-10 best selling business books on Amazon.com. Prior to coming to corporate life, Moore spent 15 years in a monastic community as a Catholic priest, doing a very similar kind of work—but getting paid a lot less. Moore comments, “If you’re thinking of writing to me, give in to the temptation. I love getting mail and being influenced by what you have to say.” E-mail him at kennythemonk@yahoo.com.

How to Avoid the Pitfalls of Change

Rick Maurer

For years the “Creating a Shift” column has discussed ways to build support for change. If asked, we could likely answer the question “What does it take to lead change well?” Most clients (and most readers of *The Journal for Quality and Participation*) know what it takes to lead change well.

As most know what to do, it might be helpful to look at what can go wrong. A 2008 McKinsey study, “An Inconvenient Truth About Change,” found that nearly 70 percent of changes in organizations fail. That dreadful statistic hasn’t changed since the first studies appeared back in the early 1990s.

In two of my 2010 *JQP* columns, I highlighted four underlying reasons why changes fail. This issue’s installment looks at specific things we should seriously consider avoiding. This column is divided into the four stages of change identified in my book *Beyond the Wall of Resistance* (Bard Press 2010) and discusses the things to avoid at each stage. (Even though we may use another change theory, we will likely find that the things to avoid are universal.)

Stage 1: Making a Compelling Case for Change

This is the most important point in the life of a change. It is the place where we not only see the challenge or opportunity, but also feel its urgency in our bones. The late Kathie Dannemiller referred to it as “creating a shift.” Her words stuck with me, and it later became the title of my regular column for this journal. There are, however, several notable things to avoid during this stage.

- *Moving to how before why.*

We need to let people know why something is important before they can get interested or even willing to hear how we want them to do it. Too often we fail to address why something is important before we launch into explaining how it should get done. I am not interested in the explanation of how, until I’m convinced this is important.

I have been subjected to many lengthy slide presentations when a well-meaning leader introduced a big change. The first three slides deal with why

this change is important, and then the next 150 mind-numbing slides deal with how the process will proceed. If he didn’t grab the audience’s attention in those first three slides, he is not going to see a spark of recognition at slide 29—his audience tuned out 20 slides ago.

My suggestion is to give a presentation with only five slides. It’ll hurt, but it will build character. This forces us to find other ways of engaging the audience. Try looking at them, asking questions, or doing other similar things.

- *The myth that all I need to do is tell them.*

While presenting information clearly is important, simply explaining things does not grab people. Data is the language of the modern organization, but it’s not enough. Just giving people facts and figures doesn’t work.

It’s as if I am thinking, “They’ve got to trust me on this.” Just because I am the boss and have been around for a while doesn’t mean that they necessarily trust me when what I say triggers powerful emotional reactions. Just because we feel the burning platform, we assume that others will too; because we are so comfortable putting slide shows together, we drown them with data. According to a McKinsey study, “What the leader cares about (and typically bases 80 percent of his or her message on) does not tap into roughly 80 percent of the workforce’s primary motivators for putting extra energy into the change program.”¹

Instead, I suggest doing what good actors do. We should put ourselves in the shoes of the audience and imagine what the world looks like through their eyes. This may seem hard, but I do this exercise with engineers, IT folks, HR specialists, and managers of all stripes, and they can do it just fine. In doing this, we begin to learn about the hopes, dreams, and fears of the people we want to influence. Give it a try. It only takes a few minutes.

- *“We’re late, we’re late for a very important date.”*

Like the Mad Hatter, it is easy to rush from one new project to the next, never building sufficient

support for change. The next new thing is seen as merely the next “flavor of the month.” That is an invitation to resistance.

A large engineering firm starts many projects, but most of them die well before the firm sees results. Consequently, managers and employees just roll their eyes when corporate announces a new idea. Some say, “This too shall pass.”

A better approach would be to take a breath, slow down, and decide what’s most important; then focus.

- *A belief that you can force them to do it.*

No, we can’t. People can find all types of creative ways to stop us in our tracks. For instance, the president of a small company once told me that his idea was dying due to “malicious compliance.” People did just enough to stay out of trouble and keep him off their backs but not enough to make the change a success.

- *Making them learn your language.*

Old management information systems departments often had the reputation of speaking some foreign language when they worked with senior management and other departments. They made the critical mistake of speaking their language and not translating so that their audience could understand them. It is our job to be multilingual so that various stakeholders can understand what we are saying. I have seen IT, HR, financial, and sales and marketing departments kill their efforts to make a case simply because they expected audiences to learn their jargon.

Why not take the presentation for a test drive? Try it out at home. Watch family members’ reactions. Ask them to raise their hands the moment they are confused. We don’t need to dumb down our presentations, but we do need to speak so that we are understood.

Stage 2: Getting Started on the Right Foot

In many ways this is “Project Planning 101,” where we set goals, objectives, timelines, assignments, communication plans, etc., There is, however, one huge item to add to that list—engagement. People must have the opportunity to think, debate, plan, test, and help bring major changes to life. Avoid the following pitfalls:

- *Too much focus on the event.*

Some organizations put a lot of time and effort into creating gala events, and then that’s it. It’s

similar to buying some weights and a treadmill, and then thinking that we’ve taken care of our need to exercise. I have seen companies spend months and untold amounts of money planning these events, giving lots of attention to getting the right speakers, the right graphics, a killer menu, a logo, and the gift bags, despite the fact that there is no evidence that gift bags have ever motivated anyone to do anything.

Cato the Censor (234-149 BC) suggested a better approach as he wrote, “Stick to the point, and the words will take care of themselves.” We need to remember why we are bringing people together, and then make sure everything we do is in service of addressing that single intention.

Let’s assume our purpose is to engage a large diagonal slice of the organization in planning so that this project gets started on the right foot. That statement should become our mantra. Everything we do to plan the event must be focused on ways to meet that objective. If the vice president of Whatshedo would like time on the agenda to talk about something unrelated to our purpose, we should be nice, but say, “no.”

- *No follow-through.*

Even well intentioned, high-involvement planning events can fail without follow-through. Imagine getting people together. They work hard and develop a detailed set of guidelines to help implement this change, and then we drop the ball. Soon people forget about the plans they made until the next change gets announced. At that point, however, we will face a room full of cynics.

I suggest only holding a planning event when it’s certain that everything necessary will be done to lead the change to completion.

- *The wrong people in the room.*

Just because we’ve got warm bodies in the room doesn’t mean they are the right people to get the job done. They may be perfectly nice people, kind to their mothers and all that, but if they lack the knowledge, skill, or influence to help create a plan, that’s a recipe for a pretty uneventful meeting.

As mentioned previously, cast a wide net. Invite people who will be willing to speak candidly about their reactions to what’s being planned. Make sure to invite people who represent a full range of interests and professional groups in the organization.

- *Confusing attendance with involvement.*

Showing people slides for seven hours and then asking if there are questions does not demonstrate involvement. It's important not to confuse giving information with planning. No one is planning anything (other than possible mutiny) while someone drones on through a set of slides. It is a rare slideshow that can engage an audience. Realize that the presentation probably is only going to cover informational issues. It is not likely to excite people or build people's trust and confidence.

To give people a lot of information, send a tweet or a white paper. Use meetings to engage people in conversations and decision making.

- *Give people a book.*

Lots of organizations give out books. For example, many organizations have given executives and managers copies of John Kotter's *Leading Change* or James Collins' *Good to Great*, and both are great choices. Giving away those books would be fine if there was some concerted plan to do something with them, but this is the osmosis approach to leading change. It's absurd to believe that people will put the book under their pillows and then magically will begin to lead with clarity and determination, making supporters wherever they go. That doesn't work.

Carefully choose the book to give, and then use it as a guide for planning and implementing the change throughout the organization. Know exactly what is expected of people as a result of reading the book.

- *Lacks juice.*

Some change projects may be necessary, but they bore people to tears. Designing new performance appraisal systems might fall into that category. Don't hold a big planning meeting that will only succeed if Starbucks supplies IV units for every table.

If the meeting will last more than an hour, invite only the people who are critical to the success of the change project. For all others, use surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one interviews, but don't make them sit in a room for three days talking about something for which they don't care. For example, survey them on their concerns or what they want from a change like this. Ask permission to send short documents for their feedback during the planning and implementation stage. Keep people informed, letting them know how their input is used.

Stage 3: Keeping Change Alive So That You See Real Results

This is the "getting the bugs out of the system" portion of a change. It is the stage where we make sure that systems are in place, that people have all the training they need, and that leaders (and everyone else for that matter) keep their eyes on goals. During this stage, be sure to watch for some of these problems:

- *Taking the tasks for granted.*

It takes a long list of pretty routine and not-all-that-sexy tasks to keep change alive. They almost seem too mundane to hold a real leader's attention. They are pedestrian tasks, and they aren't a lot of fun to monitor. Success on any one of these isn't likely to earn a standing ovation at the next corporate retreat.

This is the time to pay attention to details. If that's not possible, delegate these tasks to someone who is attending to detail and excited about making sure this project is a success. Give this person full support. Check in frequently. Coordinating details can be a tough job and one in which people often get little recognition for their work. Don't let that happen.

- *Delegating enthusiasm.*

Enthusiasm can't be delegated. While we can try to create a cadre of people who are as excited as we are, in the end, people need to know that we are 100-percent behind this project and that this project is still a high priority. People need to see proof that there is a champion for its successful implementation.

The people whose support we need are busy, just like us. If they see signs that this change is no longer a top priority, their attention will turn quickly to other projects that they believe are more important.

I recommend making the effort at least once a week to find places to reinforce the importance of this project. This is a critical stage in the life of this change. Don't let this task slide.

- *Keeping a project alive that should have died.*

Not every project should survive. When we pick up those strong signs, we must have the courage to pull the plug. For example, customers are demanding something else. Demographics are shifting and the new customer base isn't interested in the products we've got in the pipeline. Perhaps there are new threats that change what's needed. The list continues.

Under these circumstances, we need to find ways to get information from outside our work bubble. Invite people to meetings who will offer different and challenging points of view. Do whatever it takes to focus on changing conditions.

- *Forgetting to remind people about the need to make a compelling case for change.*

A sense of urgency doesn't last forever. What got our attention 18 months ago may have dissipated. It is important to watch for signals that let us know if people still feel a compelling need to change.

Remember that new people have joined teams and others have left over the course of this project. We can't expect them to magically feel the urgency. Before giving them a playbook, make sure they see and feel why this change is so desperately needed.

Stay on top of the situation. The change team should monitor peoples' attitudes and make adjustments as necessary to keep the project moving forward.

Stage 4: Getting Back on Track If You Start to Derail

This stage is usually avoidable if the first three stages are carried out effectively. Nevertheless, it is good to have contingency plans in place because unanticipated occurrences happen, disrupting an otherwise wonderful project. If the project does start to derail, here are a few erroneous assumptions to avoid:

- *Assuming that things will get better if we just forge ahead.*

If things start to go seriously off track, we've got to deal with them. Energy can work for us or against us. Unless the problem is lack of funds or some major technical glitch, negative energy leads to massive resistance.

It is preferable to slow down and consider the consequences before proceeding. Listen for the signals that people are confused, fearful, and lack trust in those who are leading the change.

- *Playing hard ball.*

Resistance can bring out the worst in us. A knee-jerk reaction is triggered, and we may take charge in an overzealous manner. We might threaten, demand, fire, replace people, or humiliate, and then we get even nastier!

Strong tactics may backfire and create bad blood for future changes, and they also send the message that when there's a problem, our first response will be to take back control from others.

- *Grabbing at the first bone.*

Strong resistance brings out our fears of being attacked and threatened. As leaders, we will probably find ourselves trying to keep knee-jerk reactions at bay. When we get something—anything—that looks like it might be the reason people are resisting, we jump on it just to ease the tension, and we go about fixing that problem. We learn later, however, that we fixed the wrong problem.

Rather than grabbing at the first bone, keep digging and looking to make sure to uncover the real reasons why things have slowed to a halt. This won't be easy, but it will be far better than fixing an insignificant issue.

- *Moving on.*

It would be great if you read this article and said to yourself, "We don't make any of those mistakes." If so, call me; I'd like to buy you lunch. For most, though, you may have nodded in recognition. I find that for my clients—and myself—that moment of recognition is key. Once I see what to avoid, coming up with a better approach is usually easy to find.

Reference:

1. McKinsey *An Inconvenient Truth About Change*, 2008.

More Online

For information on other "Creating a Shift" articles by Rick Maurer, go to www.asq.org/pub/jqp. Other resources on change management are included in this online supplement.



Rick Maurer

*Rick Maurer is an adviser to people who lead change in large organizations. He recently released the new paperback edition of his classic book *Beyond the Wall of Resistance: Why 70% of Changes Still Fail and What You Can Do About It*. You can access free tools on leading change at www.rickmaurer.com.*

Ideas and tools for promoting change

Change Resources From *The Journal for Quality and Participation's* Archives

Each issue of *The Journal for Quality and Participation* features the ongoing series, "Creating a Shift," by noted change expert Rick Maurer. Recent topics covered in this column have included the following:

- January 2011 issue—"Why Do So Many Changes Still Fail?" (part two) page 33 of the print portion of the issue.
- October 2010 issue—"Why Do So Many Changes Still Fail?" (part one) page 37 of the print portion of the issue.
- July 2010 issue—"Applying What We've Learned About Change" page 35 of the print portion of the issue.
- April 2010 issue—"Why the Stages of Grieving Are an Excuse for Inept Change Management" page 38 of the print portion of the issue.
- January 2010 issue—"Out of the Recession and Back to Employee Engagement" in the online portion of the issue.
- October 2009 issue—"Getting Your Ideas Across—Even Though You Work for the Government" page 36 of the print portion of the issue.
- July 2009 issue—"What's Happening These Days With Change?" page 37 of the print portion of the issue.
- April 2009 issue—"PowerPoint® and the Stone Age Brain" page 28 of the print portion of the issue.

For earlier issues of this column, check out www.asq.org/pub/jqp.

Other Articles on Change

Here are additional articles from recent issues that can help move your change management process:

- January 2011 issue—"Streamlining Change at the Speed of Business: Are You Ready to Surf the Next Wave of Innovation?" by Terry Doerscher, page 21 of the print portion of the issue.
- January 2010 issue—"How to Kill an Idea in 10 Easy Steps" by Thomas Koulopoulos, page 8 of the print portion of the issue.
- Summer 2008 issue—"Avoiding the Mistakes of the Past: Lessons Learned on What Makes or Breaks Quality Initiatives" by Janet Jacobsen, page 4 in print.
- Spring 2008 issue—"Successful Change Requires More Than Change Management" by Eric Carter, page 20 in print.
- Spring 2007 issue—"A New Paradigm for Organizational Change: Involving Customers and Stakeholders in the Improvement Process" by J. Marino, page 10 in print.
- Fall 2003 issue—"Corporate Funerals and the Joy of Change" by Kenny Moore, page 28 in print.

Additional articles on this essential topic are available at www.asq.org/pub/jqp.

Look at social networks
to understand an
organization's ability
to support innovation.

Social Networks as a Change Management Strategy for Performance Excellence and Innovation

Adina Suciu and Miruna Petrescu-Prahova

We are living in a world where change is gaining speed and organizations are facing the challenge of producing value for their customers while managing change. Have you heard about VUCA? VUCA stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. We recognize these characteristics as the new reality and we have to become better at navigating this new world. This means we need to be better at change management, risk management, and innovation—in other words, we need to be agile.

Some organizations use the Baldrige *Criteria for Performance Excellence*¹ as a

framework for developing and sustaining agility. In this approach, innovation is a critical factor that is assessed with an in-depth consideration of all aspects of an organization, including leadership and workforce. On the other hand, researchers in the field of organizational studies have long been preoccupied with the role of social networks, both formal and informal, in organizational performance and innovation. In this paper, we bring together the two fields by proposing an integration of organizational social network analysis in the Baldrige assessment process for leadership and



workforce. This integration has the potential to offer organizations taking the Baldrige approach with a different insight into the dynamic processes within their workforce. This approach also highlights novel avenues for managing change in attaining performance excellence and fostering a culture of innovation.

The Baldrige criteria cover seven areas: leadership; strategy; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce focus; process management; and results. Throughout the criteria, there are questions directly related to innovation and sustainability, with innovation defined as “meaningful change to improve products, processes, or organizational effectiveness and to create new value for stakeholders.”

A full Baldrige evaluation is a holistic, comprehensive view of an organization, giving leaders valuable feedback on the strengths of the organization and actionable comments related to the opportunities for improvement. When focusing on the questions targeting innovation specifically, one can gauge the readiness/maturity of the innovation deployment, helping leaders in building an organizational framework that will encourage innovation and support a successful change management process.

Some organizations use the self-assessment offered by the Baldrige program, which is a fast way to obtain “the big picture” and identify the first opportunities. The self-assessment is a much shorter list of questions in the seven areas of the Baldrige criteria. The benefits of self-assessment include:

- Identify successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Jump-start a change initiative or energize current initiatives.
- Energize the workforce.
- Focus the organization on common goals.
- Assess your organization’s performance against the competition.
- Align resources with your strategic objectives.
- Deliver world-class results.

When considering a significant change for your organization, for example, deploying innovation, your organization will benefit from a comprehensive approach, which makes the Baldrige criteria a good framework for it. Even more, you could adjust the self-assessment questions to focus only on innovation. By administering the self-assessment adjusted for innovation, you will get

the big picture related to the innovation process and deployment for that organization.

Innovation is both a change process and a social process.² Praveen Gupta, in *Business Innovation in the 21st Century*, describes the process of innovation as Brinnovation™.³ The Brinnovation sequence is as follows:

Demand → Experiences → Knowledge → Networked Knowledge → Creativity Expanded Knowledge → Combinatorial Play → Imagination/Extrapolation → Optimization → Breakthrough Innovation

When looking at innovation as a change process, it is amendable to process management and change management techniques. With its comprehensive view of the organization, the Baldrige criteria would ensure management for innovation. Even a comprehensive approach for deploying innovation that ensures all the processes are aligned, including those dealing with fostering a supportive culture, might not be enough.

Working in parallel with quality and performance excellence tools, social networking mechanisms can offer valuable research and results showing spectacular business results. Cross and Thomas discuss how social networks could be leveraged for performance and growth, including managing innovation through effective networks. Social networks provide essential information on the “people” component of an organization.⁴

When innovation is viewed as a social process, social network analysis is a powerful tool to provide in-depth information that cannot be surfaced with traditional methods. Leaders could ensure that formal and informal aspects of an organization are aligned and support innovation by being aware of and leveraging social networks.

Culture, strategy, processes, methods, tools, and time might be barriers to innovation.³ Assessing the organizational culture in relationship with innovation and establishing the methods to continuously improve it, ensures a good foundation for successful and sustainable innovation deployment.

Organizational Assessment for Innovation

Considering the change process and the social process aspects of innovation, we propose the organizational assessment for innovation. This is a variation of the Baldrige self-assessment tool enhanced with social network analysis to provide feedback on the readiness and/or maturity of the organizational culture regarding innovation.

We start with the Baldrige self-assessment modified for assessing innovation and limited to leadership and workforce. The leadership section assesses the perception of the workforce toward its leadership in relationship with innovation. The workforce focus section assesses the workforce feedback on the organization in relationship with innovation.

The Organizational Assessment for Innovation determines the level of agreement with statements about leadership and workforce focus:

Leadership

- I know my organization's mission (what it is trying to accomplish) related to innovation.
- I know my organization's vision (where it is trying to go in the future) related to innovation.
- My senior leaders create a work environment conducive to innovation.
- My organization's leaders share information about the organization.
- My organization asks what I think.

Workforce Focus

- The people I work with cooperate and work as a team.
- My bosses encourage me to innovate.
- I am recognized for my innovation ideas.
- I am committed to my organization's success.

The first step is to evaluate the statements using a five-level scale (strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree) so the organization gets overall feedback on leadership and workforce in relationship to innovation. The feedback will be related to the relationships between leaders and team members and between team members and the overall organization, based on the formal structure in place.

The second step is to assess the social network corresponding to that organization. Consider the following example: Let's assume that the answers for the Baldrige innovation assessment suggest that for the question, *"My senior leaders create a work environment conducive to innovation,"* the answers were not high marks and the leaders are interested to find out more and why this is happening. Applying social networks techniques, you could investigate several types of relevant relationships. Start with relationships that reveal rigidity in a network,⁴ which have to do with decision making, communication, task flow, and power of influence. The following survey could be administered:

- *Decision making:* Please indicate to whom you turn for input prior to making an important decision.
- *Communicate more:* I would be more effective in my work, including innovation, if I were able to communicate more with this person.
- *Task flow:* Please indicate the extent to which the people listed below provide you with inputs necessary to do your job, including innovation.
- *Power of influence:* Please indicate the extent to which you consider each person listed below to be influential—that is, people who seem to have pull, weight, or clout in this organization.

The "decision-making" component of the survey will reveal the people who have the most influence in moving things forward. The "communicate more" segment will show gaps in people's effectiveness. "Task flow" will uncover opportunities for aligning job roles. Finally, the "power of influence" section will reveal the key people in the formal structure. Using this feedback, your leaders have the opportunity to improve the alignment between the formal structure and the social network. For example, the organizational assessment might reveal people who are centers of influence and/or knowledge but don't have leadership positions on the organization chart. This information is very valuable in improving the effectiveness of the organization, by either promoting these people into leadership positions and/or engaging them to their full potential. In this example, the deployment of innovation will be more effective when recognizing and engaging these high-potential people.

Other types of assessments used in social network analysis that could be used for innovation are relationships that demonstrate collaboration in a network and relationships that reveal well-being and supportiveness in a network. Relationships that reveal collaboration in a network focus on communication, information, problem solving, and innovation. Relationships that uncover well-being and supportiveness in a network center on liking, friendship, career support, personal support, energy, and trust. Information sharing is also conducive to innovation. A social network analysis for information-sharing potential focuses on knowledge awareness, access, engagement, and safety.

- *Knowledge awareness:* I understand this person's knowledge and skills. This does not necessarily mean that I have these skills or am knowledgeable in these domains but that I understand

what skills this person has and the domains in which he or she is knowledgeable.

- **Access:** When I need information or advice, this person is generally accessible to me within a sufficient amount of time to help me solve my problem.
- **Engagement:** If I ask this person for help, I can feel confident that he or she will actively engage in problem solving with me.
- **Safety:** Please indicate the extent to which you feel personally comfortable asking this person for information or advice on work-related topics.

To illustrate the use of these assessment statements, an example for “awareness” is provided. Let’s assume you have two teams. People in the respective teams are represented as circles and triangles. Figure 1 shows the two teams and the “awareness” relationships between people. One arrow means that a person understands the skills of the person to which the arrow is pointing. Two arrows mean that both people understand each other’s skills.

Also presume that the leaders of these teams are organizing a brainstorming session with representatives from both teams. Without a social network analysis, the people indicated by the gray shapes might be invited to the meeting because they are strong contributors to their respective teams. By looking at the “awareness” diagram, you see that the initial selection might not be too conducive to productive collaboration, since the two people initially selected don’t understand each other’s skills and they are not aware of the people’s skills in the other group.

Leveraging the information from the “awareness” assessment, the people indicated by the gray shapes in Figure 2 might be a better selection. They understand each other’s skills, they also understand the skills of people on the other team, and they are well connected within their own teams.

Continuing the social network analysis, another important item is access. Figure 3 illustrates an example using the same teams. In this example, the “access” analysis suggests that the same people, who are good choices for the brainstorming sessions because of their awareness, are also the most accessible in the two groups.

These examples illustrate how social network analysis provides valuable information for the innovation process and deployment. The gaps identified in the social network analysis become actionable

Figure 1: Initial Selection

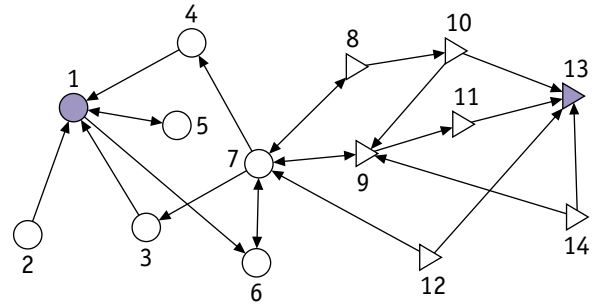


Figure 2: Selection After Social Network Analysis

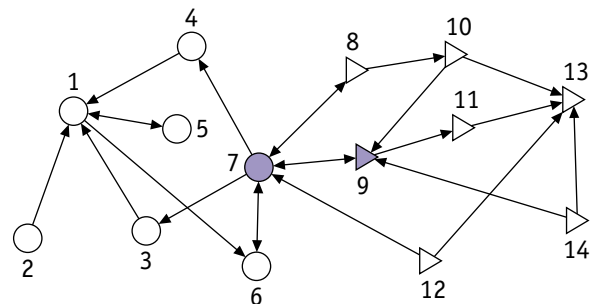
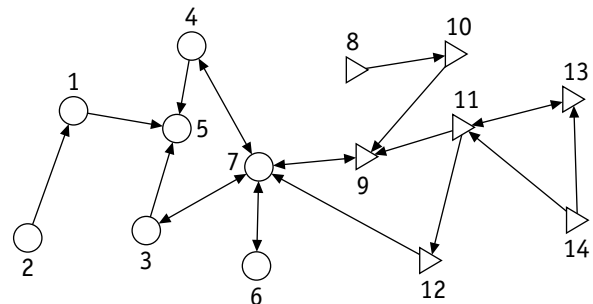


Figure 3: Access in a Social Network



feedback for improving the organizational culture. Leaders might arrange for collaboration-fostering activities and events for the people who are less connected because “the building block of innovation is a networked individual.”³

Within an organization where the social network is acknowledged and leveraged in supporting the formal structure, the obstacles to innovation (fragmentation, domination, and insularity), as identified by Cross and Thomas, could be recognized and addressed quickly.

- **Fragmentation** is the situation when the collaboration breaks down across functional lines.
- **Domination** occurs when a few central network members who contributed to good initiatives

in the past can drown out novel ideas and drive innovation efforts along traditional trajectories, even after the market veers in another direction.

- *Insularity* is the inability to recognize and leverage relevant external expertise, and can result in excessive cost structures and delays that cause missed market opportunities.

Fragmentation, domination, and insularity are complementary to the barriers to innovation discussed earlier: culture, strategy, processes, methods, tools, and time.³

Social Network Opportunity

By recognizing both the formal and informal organizational aspects of innovation deployment, an organization increases its chances of sustained success. Results of a Gallup Organization survey show that in organizations, an average of 42 percent of employees are “engaged,” 44 percent “not engaged,” and 14 percent are “actively disengaged.” The challenge is how to engage more of the not engaged employees so that the 44-percent figure will decrease. With results from social network analysis, the leaders have more actionable feedback on how and where to focus to create more engagement and better satisfaction in the workforce for a better alignment with the processes.

Organizational Assessment for Innovation

Combining the social network survey along with the Baldrige self-assessment allows an organization to identify potential organizational risks that otherwise might get overlooked. The assessment has two parts:

- First, assess the leaders of the organization.
- Second, focus on the people in the organization.

Here’s a suggested approach to follow: focus on a group of 20 or fewer people (peers) and a group of 20 or fewer leaders, including the leader of that group and his/her peers. (The online portion of this article provides an example of the assessment.) Ask your groups to fill out the assessment. Analyze the results and you’ll be surprised by the valuable information you’ll get: what you do well, what are opportunities for improvement, and who are the people most influential in your organization.

Conclusions

The organizational assessment for innovation brings together performance excellence tools and social network analysis and provides valuable and

actionable feedback for the innovation process and deployment. An organization will be more effective in managing change and strengthening its innovation-oriented culture when taking advantage of social network analysis combined with the Baldrige self-assessment.

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More Online

The authors provided a sample template for conducting an organizational assessment for innovation. Find it online at <http://www.asq.org/pub/jqp>.



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Supplementary Material for “Social Networks as a Change Management Strategy for Performance Excellence and Innovation”

Adina Suciuc and Miruna Petrescu-Prahova have provided the following survey template as a supplement to their article. The tables within this template provide sample questions to assess the social networks within an organization. The importance of these networks forms the basis for their article.

When using this template, the names of all leaders and co-workers in the organizational unit under analysis should be pre-loaded by the survey planner.

Organizational Assessment for Innovation—Leadership

Leadership	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I know my organization's mission (what it is trying to accomplish) related to innovation.					
2. I know my organization's vision (where it is trying to go in the future) related to innovation.					
3. My senior leaders create a work environment conducive to innovation.					
4. My organization's leaders share information about the organization.					
5. My organization asks what I think.					

Decision making: Please indicate whom you turn to for input prior to making an important decision.	Mark your selection
[Name of leader 1 here]	
[Leader 2]	
[Etc.]	

Communicate More: I would be more effective in my work, including innovation, if I were able to communicate more with this person.	Mark your selection
[Name of leader 1 here]	
[Leader 2]	
[Etc.]	

Power of Influence: Please indicate the extent to which you consider the leaders below to be influential for the innovation deployment.	Mark your selection
[Name of leader 1 here]	
[Leader 2]	
[Etc.]	

Organizational Assessment for Innovation—Workforce Focus

Leadership	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The people I work with cooperate and work as a team.					
2. My bosses encourage me to innovate.					
3. I am recognized for my innovation ideas.					
4. I am committed to my organization's success.					

Access: When I need information or advice, this person is accessible to me.	Mark your selection
[Name of co-worker 1 here]	
[Co-worker 2]	
[Etc.]	

Awareness of Others: I understand this person's knowledge and skills. This does not necessarily mean that I have these skills or am knowledgeable in these domains but that I understand what skills this person has and the domains in which he or she is knowledgeable.	Mark your selection
[Name of co-worker 1 here]	
[Co-worker 2]	
[Etc.]	

Communicate More: I would be more effective in my work, including innovation, if I were able to communicate more with this person.	Mark your selection
[Name of co-worker 1 here]	
[Co-worker 2]	
[Etc.]	

Career Information: I frequently receive information about career advancement from this leader.	Mark your selection
[Name of leader 1 here]	
[Leader 2]	
[Etc.]	

Awareness of Innovation: The following leaders acknowledge my/my team's work on innovation.	Mark your selection
[Name of leader 1 here]	
[Leader 2]	
[Etc.]	

Project Team Socialization

Are Text Messaging and IM Damaging Team Performance?

Thomas P. Wise

More than technology is required to build relationships among virtual team members—what's expedient for the process may not be efficient for creating collaboration.

There are no longer six degrees of separation from Kevin Bacon as social media continues to have a dramatic impact on our world. In 2008, it was reported that 64 percent of teens engaged in some form of electronically-mediated communication.¹ Flash mobs, flash Christmas caroling at the shopping mall, government collapse in the Middle East, and fan morale falling as NFL players tweet their dissatisfaction with the Chicago Bears quarterback as he walks off the field during the 2011 NFC championship game are all derivatives of the new social media power.

Relationships and expectations are rapidly evolving in an always-on world.² Each of us has probably noticed an employee texting another across the room, or from cube to cube, rather than walking over for a brief moment of face-to-face communication. Many of us have texted a child in another room of the house because it's the best means to gain his/her attention. The world is no longer small, but is now very small and very flat, as everyone is accessible and total strangers are now closely trusted with the most delicate feelings.³

One often-raised question is how communication through modern electronic media may affect employee performance and project outcomes when conditions or practices preclude the common face-to-face communication. As electronically-mediated communication invades the workplace, and more companies make the move to virtual project teams, the question of motivation and work performance becomes increasingly complicated. Performance and motivation are closely linked through literature and practice, and neither can be effectively discussed or managed in isolation.

According to Whetten and Cameron, performance is a quotient of ability and motivation, while ability is the quotient of aptitude, training,

and resources. They define motivation as the quotient of desire and commitment.⁴ These seven variables come together to make the backbone of every project team with the capability of impacting a team's success or failure. This article explores the question of motivation and employee performance in relation to the use of electronic communication media and virtual work teams as well as the motivational factors in Whetten and Cameron's performance equation.

Maslow provides motivational theory in a graphical representation of unsatisfied needs in a hierarchical pyramid based on the human desire to first satisfy basic-level needs before moving up the hierarchy.⁵ Physiological and safety needs, according to Maslow, must be satisfied before the employee is driven toward satisfying needs at the social and self-esteem levels.⁵ At the pinnacle of Maslow's hierarchy is the desire for self-actualization as the employee seeks to reach his/her full potential driven by intrinsic needs for satisfaction.⁶ Herzberg complements Maslow with his theory of hygiene factors in motivational theory, which seeks to explain the de-motivation or stepping down Maslow's hierarchy, as lower-level needs are raised regarding self-esteem and social needs.⁶

Maslow and Herzberg form a basis to better understand employee motivational research in the 21st century as managers seek to grasp motivational theory in relation to project teams. Blaskova explains that motivation is formed intrinsically through a worker's internal belief system.⁷ The worker may extend trust through a predetermined response based on expectations, known as institutional trust. This type of trust is dependent upon the degree to which the worker views the management system as consistent and equitable.⁸

Workers are often willing to adjust their performance based on the presence of motivational factors in the workplace.⁷ Maintaining a motivational workplace, however, is becoming more difficult as teams are increasingly dependent on electronic communication and are dispersed

throughout the world, raising concerns at the lower social and safety needs of Maslow's pyramid. Powell expressed this concern declaring that as teams move to a virtual team model, whether by corporate design or as an expression of social and generational difference, socialization of teams is reduced. This hinders the establishment of support and the membership employees once gained through workplace relationships.⁹

Powell questions how the social bonds in Maslow's hierarchy effectively form when team members increasingly never meet in the break room, often don't verbally communicate or commune in the hallway, and many times have never even met?⁹ Weems-Landingham distinguishes the natural difference between virtual teams and traditional teams as not simply the physical separation, but the additional challenge of the psychological dispersion.¹⁰

Yet is this merely a generational question? In 1978, Cooper lamented about the lack of development knowledge in the managers assigned to develop software, and yet today it is hard to find a young person without some level of electronics expertise.¹¹ Although separated by geographic miles, or merely by social practices, teams are now connected 24/7 by text, telephone, wiki, e-mail, blog, social networking sites, and virtual game worlds. Much like the struggles of management in 1978, managers today must learn to exploit and master the generational differences as companies scramble to learn to connect the incumbent employee with the social practices of the young and coming new worker. As Kaplan and Haenlein note, the practice of social media is now a revolutionary trend, pulling the world together in ways that baby boomers could never imagine, changing the psychology of team socialization.¹²

Moore addresses the psychology of team socialization and indicates the need for leadership motivational practices, such as goal setting, personnel development, and activity coordination, as absolutely essential in strengthening virtual and geographically dispersed teams.¹³ Moore suggests requiring that team leaders possess the skill sets necessary to communicate in a 21st century environment to build the relationships between team members, create the psychologically safe work environment, and provide encouragement and opportunity for professional growth.¹³

Organizations should encourage team socialization as a motivational tool to address the needs that Maslow described for social-level actualization before a team can attain greater satisfaction and motivation.¹³ Weems-Landingham says that managers of effective virtual teams rely heavily on understanding the feelings, work problems, issues, and other situational conditions, as well as individual motivations and team member interdependencies to demonstrate situational awareness and empathy for team members.¹⁰ Additionally, the need to listen attentively and actively in a non-evaluative way is heightened due to the absence of face-to-face communication.

The manager of virtual work teams, therefore, must enlist every available means in the new world of electronic communication to listen and gather facts to fully understand the factual conditions, as well as employ the traditional methods of listening, empathy, teambuilding, and participation to bridge the generational or geographic gap.¹⁰ Text messaging, IM, e-mail, and other electronic media are effective and essential devices and strategies for effective work teams and should not be a disruptive or limiting agent in communication and team socialization. The effective manager of high performing teams must find creative ways to meet employees' safety and socialization needs if the team is to serve as a truly effective virtual workforce.

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The Quality Professional's Role in ISO 26000

Janet Jacobsen

To provide additional information about the recently released ISO 26000 standard on social responsibility, ASQ and Manpower Professional co-authored a white paper on this timely subject. The paper, *Social Responsibility and the Quality Professional: The Implications of ISO 26000*, is designed to guide both quality professionals and business leaders as they maximize the role of the quality professional in SR initiatives. This article highlights the key points of the white paper.

While many people accept the importance of corporate social responsibility, there is less agreement on a definition of SR. The new ISO 26000 standard offers a definition of what it means to be a socially responsible organization and why companies should adopt the premises of the standard.

The ISO 26000 standard was truly an international effort as experts from more than 76 countries created the document. It provides a common vernacular and outlines key areas of impact. The standard, released in late 2010, describes SR as a multi-faceted approach that, similar to quality, an organization should integrate into all aspects of how it conducts business.

According to ISO 26000, SR isn't merely a "neutralizing" action applied at the end of production or distribution to "fix" what was generated or displaced. Instead, it's a proactive mindset that is ideally incorporated across all levels of an organization's activities.

Quality professionals are particularly well suited to help advance a corporate strategy that includes both socially-focused and bottom-line benefits. Given ASQ's leadership role as the U.S. Technical Advisory Group administrator during the standards-writing process, it's not surprising that the topic of SR is taking on greater focus within the Society. In fact, the 2008 ASQ *Futures Study* elevated SR to the second leading force of change in the quality field.¹

Benefits of SR

SR combines the promises of doing good while at the same time contributing to the overall

health of an organization. ISO 26000 notes that socially responsible activities promote:

- Better decision making, knowledge of risks, and risk management.
- Public trust and strong reputations.
- Competitive strength.
- Positive stakeholder relationships.
- Innovation.
- Employee safety, loyalty, and morale.
- Employee recruitment and retention efforts.
- Bottom-line savings from increased efficiency of resource allocation, decreased waste, and reuse of byproducts.
- Reliability and fairness in transactions, fair trade, and absence of corruption.
- Long-term viability through sustainable natural resources and environmental services.
- Public good, civil society, and institutions.

Principles and Their Application

Without question, applying SR concepts is a complex endeavor. Competing priorities, cultural differences, and other variables can create confusion regarding the right actions to take. The standard indicates, however, that complexity is not excuse for inaction. Rather, organizations should apply the seven principles of socially responsible behavior, listed in Table 1. Both organizational leaders and quality professionals can serve as advocates for the application of these guiding principles.

Core Subject Areas

The standard also applies these principles to seven core subject areas that further describe socially responsible areas of activity or focus.

Organizational Governance

Defined as the system by which an organization makes and implements decisions in pursuit of its objectives.² Quality professionals can play a

Table 1: The Seven Principles of Socially Responsible Behavior

Principles	Application to Core Subjects
Accountability	The organization is answerable to those affected by its decisions and activities.
Transparency	The organization should reasonably disclose policies, decisions, and activities, including known and likely impacts.
Ethical behavior	Behavior should be based on honesty, ethics, and integrity.
Respect for stakeholder interests	The organization should take into account the rights, claims, and interests of all stakeholders.
Respect for rule of law	The organization must comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
Respect for international norms of behavior	An organization respects international norms of behavior while respecting the rule of law.
Respect for human rights	The organization respects and fosters the rights covered in the International Bill of Human Rights.

role by integrating an SR framework into the ways they view opportunities, proposals, and ongoing processes of the organization.

Human Rights

Two subcategories are noted. The first concerns civil and political rights such as the right to life and liberty, equality before the law, and freedom of expression. The second focuses on economic, social, and cultural rights such as the right to work; the right to food, health, and education; and the right to social security.² Quality professionals are part of this focus on several fronts, including selecting suppliers and the workforce and evaluating or mitigating the impact of corporate actions on the individuals' abilities to lead healthy, productive lives.

Labor Practices

This encompasses all policies and practices related to work performed within, by, or on behalf of an organization. It also includes the responsibilities of an organization for work performed on its behalf by others, including subcontracted work.² Quality professionals can directly affect labor practices by ensuring that processes requiring labor are efficient and safe, both within the organization, and to the extent possible, to subcontractors and suppliers.

The Environment

Environmental impacts may be associated with the organization's use of living and non-living resources, location of the organization's

activities, generation of pollution and wastes, and the implications of the organization's activities, products, and services for natural habitats.² This is likely the core subject area that quality professionals can most strongly influence. The choice of raw materials, processes used, and the resulting products and byproducts directly impact the environment. For example, quality leaders can help refine processes to decrease the volume of product used or increase the ease of recycling.

Some of the ways that quality professionals can apply their expertise in this core subject area include:

- Assess environmental impacts before starting an activity or project.
- Implement planning, design, and operating practices to minimize potential environmental burdens.
- Introduce resource efficiency measures.
- Aim for carbon neutrality by implementing measures to offset remaining greenhouse gas emissions.

Fair Operating Practices

This subject area concerns the ethical conduct in dealings with other organizations and individuals. Quality professionals can help drive fair operating practices by ensuring their activities support the integrity of the individuals and environments encountered. They can implement socially responsible practices throughout the value chain.

Consumer Issues

Organizations that provide products to consumers, as well as other customers, have responsibilities to those groups. These responsibilities include providing education and accurate information; using fair, transparent, and helpful marketing information and contractual processes; and promoting sustainable consumption. They also involve minimizing the risk from using the products and services, as well as protecting the security of personal information and the privacy of consumers.² It's quite common to find that quality professionals are already focused on maximizing customer value by decreasing errors and improving functionality of products and services. To further socially responsible actions, quality professionals can also apply their expertise in designing products that are usable by all; to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design; eliminating or minimizing negative health and environmental impacts; and focusing on the reuse/repair/recycling of products and packaging.

Community Involvement and Development

Community involvement is an organization's proactive outreach to the community. It's aimed at preventing and solving problems, fostering partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders, and aspiring to be a good organizational citizen of the community.² The ISO 26000 standard notes that organizations are part of the communities they impact and not merely objective parties. Given this, organizations have the responsibility to support and sustain their communities. Quality professionals can help ensure that stakeholders' concerns are heard and integrated into decision making. In addition, quality professionals can advance the organization's SR agenda by applying their knowledge and expertise to all phases of the product life cycle, the operation of suppliers, and consumers' use of the product.

Survey Shows Unfamiliarity With SR

As noted in the previous section on the core subject areas, the quality professional can play a vital role in identifying SR opportunities across many disciplines. In a September 2010 survey of more than 1,000 ASQ members and other members of the quality community, however, 40 percent of respondents indicated they were only somewhat

familiar or not at all familiar with SR concepts. These findings indicate gaps in knowledge and highlight the opportunity for education on SR for both individuals and organizations.

Awareness and Leadership

Forty percent of survey respondents said they were either somewhat or not at all familiar with SR. This may indicate that many organizations have yet to embrace SR strategically and apply it consistently. Supporting this finding were results showing that three in 10 respondents did not have knowledge of their organization's activities or saw them as limited or emerging:

- Twelve percent of respondents noted that they don't know what their organization is doing in the area of SR.
- Nine percent reported their organization's efforts as focusing solely on charitable giving.
- Five percent do not believe their organization is engaged in any SR efforts.
- Four percent reported that their organization is planning to integrate SR into its strategies.

Among the remaining respondents, 42 percent said their organization engages in SR in some areas but doesn't have a fully integrated strategy, while 28 percent reported their organizations' efforts are fully integrated and proactive.

The survey also asked if the organization's quality professions are included in SR efforts. Approximately 40 percent said they did not know or they didn't answer the question, which indicates a high degree of uncertainty. Among those who did respond 51 percent said yes, 21 percent reported no, and 28 percent said they did not know.

When asked if the ISO 26000 standard will impact the ongoing skills/behaviors required of quality professionals, most respondents were uncertain. This aligns with the facts that only 60 percent of respondents were familiar/very familiar with SR concepts. It's possible that some quality professionals are already engaged in activities which could be classified under the heading of SR, but lacking a definition or clear directive, fail to categorize it as such.

Advancing SR With Quality

Quality professionals will need to develop strong relationships with organization leaders to maximize the impact of quality on SR. In May

2010, ASQ hosted an executive roundtable of senior-level leaders to discuss top CEO challenges and how the quality function can better support these initiatives. The roundtable discussions highlighted the following ways that quality can better align with leadership:

- Build the business case for quality by tying the quality plan to the organization's business plan. Show how quality affects top-line growth and bottom-line revenue.
- Position quality professionals as internal consultants and advocates.
- Train others in the organization to use quality tools and metrics.
- Use customer testimonials and measures rather than reporting outcomes.
- Engage in feedback systems such as surveys, hotlines, and social media.
- Innovate and help drive risk taking.
- Know the competition and their strengths.
- Promote the best employees to and from the quality function.

To advance SR principles within the organization it is important to help quality professionals refine their skills in strategic planning, communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, as well as data capture, analysis, and packaging. Once these skills are in place, those in the quality field can work with leadership to:

- Create a policy to address SR and a plan for full implementation. Organizations might consider selecting one to three critical areas for the initial focus to better leverage the organization's mission. For each area create measure goals and objectives, a budget, implementation schedule, and a plan for determining if additional resources will be needed.

- Enlist support from other entities affected by the organization's commitment to SR.
- Manage plan implementation using traditional quality and project management tools and techniques.

Conclusion

The call for a sharper focus on SR is clear, even if measured only by the fact that finite resources and bottom-line expectations are demanding it. Inherent in the standard is the opportunity to do well by doing good. Organizations can decrease costs, increase customer and employee loyalty, secure preferred customer status, and more by implementing a strategic SR plan.

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More Online

To read the entire white paper, go to http://asq.org/2011/02/iso-26000/social-responsibility-and-the-quality-professional-the-implications-of-iso-26000.pdf?WT.dcsvid=NzI2NDM4NDEwS0&WT.mc_id=EM6342M.



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social RESPONSIBILITY

Did You Know?

Have you noticed an increase in advertising and other promotional activities from corporations that are attempting to communicate their commitment to corporate social responsibility? Worthy as these efforts are, this new management emphasis can be traced to an increase in consumer focus on areas beyond the traditional quality of products and services. It is no longer sufficient for an organization to produce the best widget, but it must do so in a way that satisfies the triple bottom line: economic, environmental, and social performance.

Industry Canada's website (http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csr-rse.nsf/eng/h_rs00164.html) describes a variety of approaches consumers

can use to learn more about an organization's practices. For instance, "Look for information from the company, but also about the company. Search government publications and independent reports that evaluate or compare the performance of products and companies. Magazines and online consumer guides can also provide useful information."

The key is to invest some upfront time investigating which suppliers' products and services you will use, rather than relying on habit and impulse. The time you spend learning more about vendors' philosophies and practices will contribute to the continuous improvement of the way business is conducted around the world.

This series of books offers a framework for improving classroom effectiveness and provides subject-specific applications.

An Inside Look at the Books

The Continuous Improvement Classroom Series

Jay Marino

This article offers a review of the *Continuous Improvement Classroom* series published by ASQ's Quality Press. The five titles in this collection include: *Continuous Improvement in the Mathematics Classroom* by Melody J. Russell, *Continuous Improvement in the Language Arts Classroom* by Vickie Hedrick, *Continuous Improvement in the English Classroom* by Janelle R. Coady, *Continuous Improvement in the History and Social Studies Classroom* by Daniel R. McCaulley, and *Continuous Improvement in the Science Classroom, Second Edition* by Jeffrey J. Burgard. These books were written by teachers for teachers.

This article answers three important questions for educators:

- What do the books in the series have in common?
- What is unique to each book?
- How can the series assist educators in the implementation of the continuous improvement classroom?

Common Themes and Information

To varying degrees, each of the books in the series addresses common themes and information. Readers will appreciate the background information that each book contains, including an overview of continuous improvement in education, a summary of systems theory, the impact of Deming's influence, Lee Jenkins' "L to J" approach, the plan, do, study, act cycle, and a variety of tools, examples, templates, and student activities for practical classroom application. Each of the elements common to the series is summarized briefly.

Continuous Improvement in Education

To serve as context for readers, a historical overview of continuous improvement in education is provided. What is continuous improvement in education? This approach is described as an avenue that allows students to actively participate in classroom decision-making processes, the development of

critical-thinking skills, and the establishment of becoming life-long learners. Student empowerment and ownership are key elements of the continuous improvement classroom. The authors describe this model as educators creating a classroom system that empowers students by assessing their work and providing input into classroom improvements. Increased student performance is a primary outcome of a continuous improvement classroom and is a result of students and teachers working together collaboratively, a demonstration of 21st century learning.

Systems Theory

The terms “systems theory” and “systems thinking” are referenced throughout the series. Systems theory is guided by the premise that the behavior of systems follows common principles and that the elements of systems interact in predictable ways. Peter Senge’s book, *The Fifth Discipline*,¹ is referenced frequently. Senge defines systems thinking as the fifth discipline. He found that when integrating the other four disciplines (shared vision, personal mastery, mental models, and team learning) with the fifth discipline, organizational change occurred. Systems thinking creates a shift from a fragmented view of individual and independent tasks to seeing the system interconnected as a whole.

Deming’s Influence

In this series the authors focus on the work of W. Edwards Deming and his contributions to continuous improvement. Systems theory took form in the United States in the 1970s as American companies realized they were losing their competitive edge to international companies, particularly those located in Japan. Many American products and services were costly and of increasingly poor quality, while Japanese automobiles and electronics were reasonably priced and of high quality. Deming was identified as the leader of Japan’s quality movement following World War II. Japan’s national award, the Deming Prize for Quality, was named after the man who provided such valuable assistance in rebuilding Japan’s economy.

Deming believed that 96 percent of problems are system problems and, therefore, a clear understanding of the system is required before beginning improvement efforts. The Deming approach² was predicated on the continuous improvement of

work processes, which are the core operating functions of an organization. Deming believed that improving processes was the key to improving quality. He understood the importance of viewing an organization as a system in which all components have a function that blends together for increased productivity and efficiency.

Lee Jenkins’ “L to J” Approach

The authors partially connect their approach and classroom success to Jenkins’ “L to J” process. Jenkins was inspired by Deming’s message to educators in 1992 when he stated that these principles could be applied to education. Jenkins was eager to implement the practices into his educational system, which led to the approach known today as L to J.³ Jenkins defines the L to J approach through five key points:⁴

- L to J is the desired shape of the graphs for the school year. The “L” shape is the typical graph at the beginning of the school year. The bell curve is acceptable for the middle of the school year, and the “J” curve is the goal for the end of the year.
- If the curriculum meets high standards, the results of the year’s first assessment will be in an “L” shape. If curriculum expectations are weak or the students arrive better prepared than expected, then the graph will be in a typical bell shape prior to any instruction.
- If the instruction is appropriate, the results at the year’s end will be a “J” curve. A bell-shaped curve at the conclusion of the year is evidence of weak instruction throughout the year.
- An educational system that consistently produces “L’s” at the beginning of the year and “J’s” at the end of the year is providing society what it desires for education—quality, high standards, and high student success rates.
- L to J is a way for students and staff to visualize both high standards and superior student success rates.

The L to J process allows students to learn all about data analysis using their own data. With this process, students and teachers are able to see both individual and class progress each week. A “Teacher Implementation Plan for L to J” is included in *Continuous Improvement in the Math Classroom* by Melody Russell to serve as a practical example for teachers. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Teacher Implementation Plan for L to J

Teacher Implementation Plan for L to J 8th Grade Math Geering Junior High	
Step 1:	Write the essential skills list based on previous years' skills lists.
Step 2:	Create questions and answers to use for random weekly quizzes.
Step 3:	Decide how to choose the weekly questions to make them random.
Step 4:	Design the forms to include in students' L to J folders. 1. Instruction sheet 2. Answer sheets 3. Student run chart 4. Class scatter diagram 5. Class run chart 6. Histograms
Step 5:	Design item analysis forms and chart to compile for teacher.
Step 6:	Construct large classroom graphs including mean, median, mode, and range charts.
Step 7:	Create final exam and answer key.

The Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle

To provide readers with a standardized approach for making classroom improvements, the authors introduce the PDSA cycle throughout the series. This four-step problem-solving process is standard practice in the continuous improvement classroom. The PDSA cycle is summarized as follows:

- *Plan.* Objectives are established, and the process selected for improvement is defined in its current state. Root causes are identified, and an improvement theory is generated.
- *Do.* The improvement theory is implemented, often on a small scale, to determine its effectiveness.
- *Study.* The new process is measured and compared to the prior state to determine if the improvement theory was effective and delivered desirable results.

- *Act.* If results were favorable from the implementation of the improvement theory, the system is changed to reflect the "new learning," and a plan to apply necessary changes in the system is developed and implemented.

As noted by Janelle Coady in the *Continuous Improvement in the English Classroom*, "teachers implement this cycle on a daily basis as they deploy lesson plans and then decide whether the plans were effective in producing increased student achievement." In this series, the authors explain how the PDSA cycle can drive improvements in the classroom.

Tools, Activities, and Examples

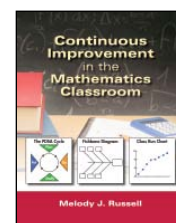
Each of the books includes a variety of practical examples, teaching tools, and activities to support the continuous improvement classroom. In many instances, the authors share personal stories and firsthand experiences to help the readers understand the continuous improvement classroom. Specific tools are provided for teachers, and photos and examples of student work are included to demonstrate their utility in the classroom. Some of the books include templates for rubrics, directions for setting up a spreadsheet, and Internet resources for teachers, to name a few.

An Overview and Summary of the Uniqueness of Each Book

Continuous Improvement in the Mathematics Classroom by Melody J. Russell

This how-to book is written as a narrative combined with practical applications, which have proven successful in Russell's 8th grade math classroom. The author shares how she created a positive and challenging learning environment for her students that produced results in achievement.

Key chapters of the book focus on topics such as the classroom as a system, homework/grading, and deciding what to teach. The author uses "key points" at the end of each chapter to ensure the reader is exposed to the primary concepts in each section. Authentic photos capturing essential artifacts from her classroom are sprinkled throughout the book providing readers with firsthand experiences from a real classroom. The author creatively includes unique resources such



as classroom activities and a literature book list to support math instruction and assist educators in implementation.

***Continuous Improvement in the Language Arts Classroom* by Vickie Hedrick**

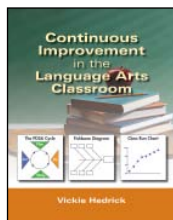
This publication provides a firsthand experience on how to build a classroom system with effective processes and tools to take student learning to new levels of achievement. Hedrick emphasizes thinking and planning before doing, the importance of data collection, and the consideration of feedback to drive continuous improvement in the classroom. The book includes practical examples from elementary school to middle school, assisting classroom teachers in their continuous improvement journeys.

The book is organized into seven chapters that build on each other. Chapter titles include "Foundational," "Basic Beliefs," "The Systems Approach to Thinking," "L to J All the Way," "Quality Principals for Classroom Management," "Building the Dream Team," "Tools for the Toolbox," and "The L to J Story Continues." The author includes distinctive information to support the core content of the book. Newspaper headlines, personal e-mails, letters to parents, actual classroom rubrics, examples of student data sheets, and even photos of sticky notes written by students provide practical examples of classroom application.

Of particular interest is the section that connects Robert J. Marzano's nine research-based instructional strategies to the continuous improvement classroom. The author demonstrates how techniques such as setting objectives and providing feedback, cooperative learning, and nonlinguistic representation can be integrated and applied with the L to J process.

***Continuous Improvement in the English Classroom* by Janelle R. Coady**

In this book readers are given an idea of how the L to J process works and the necessary tools to apply the process in any classroom setting. The author organized the



book in a way that takes readers through each step of the process, ranging from creating a plan and monitoring progress to reflecting on results and making adjustments. Like the rest of the books in the series, a history of continuous improvement in education and the steps to the L to J process also are explained.

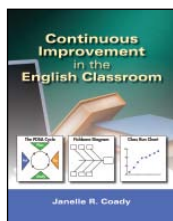
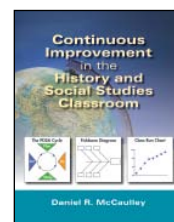
This book includes a particular focus on using technology as a tool in the continuous improvement classroom. The author exclaims, "The topic of technology and the role in my classroom could probably be an entire book in itself." Coady shares how technology can assist in managing results weekly, quarterly, and annually. Techniques such as using spreadsheet and presentation software and document cameras are explained, and examples of classroom application are presented.

***Continuous Improvement in the History and Social Studies Classroom* by Daniel R. McCaulley**

Classroom practitioners are the target audience for this book. The author shares his continuous improvement journey based on 30 years of experience in education. He explains that he "came across something that makes sense for teachers and students—the revolutionary L to J process that focuses on changing students' achievement scores from an "L" shape where few students succeed to a "J" shape where the majority achieve."

A unique chapter in this book is titled "Seven Deadly Sins of Continuous Improvement." Readers will appreciate reviewing these cautions when implementing continuous improvement practices in their classroom. The seven deadly sins of continuous improvement include:

- *Lack of teacher enthusiasm.* This one speaks for itself!
- *Creating artificial goals.* Teachers should avoid setting goals that are terminal, or in other words, goals that tend to end the continuous improvement process when reached.
- *Creating cross-class competition.* Classroom rivalries tend to defeat the cooperative nature of continuous improvement. Educators should foster cooperation and team building, rather than competition.

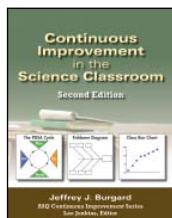


- *All dressed up and no place to go.* Setting standards low to experience immediate success is tempting; however, teachers should avoid “teaching to test” to see results.
- *Grading the weekly quizzes.* Teachers do not have to grade everything that comes across their desk. Weekly continuous improvement quizzes are designed to show growth over time. Educators can keep morale high in the classroom by allowing students to demonstrate progress without the fear of a grade.
- *No preview.* In the L to J process, teachers do not grade students on content that has yet to be taught and learned. Teachers are encouraged to preview material and information with students prior to expecting mastery.
- *Extrinsic rewards for gains.* Teachers should avoid offering tangible rewards for positive gains on class run charts. One of the most powerful aspects of the continuous improvement classroom is the ability to place a value on learning for its own sake.

Continuous Improvement in the Science Classroom (Second Edition) by Jeffrey J. Burgard

Jeffrey Burgard shares his new learning and insights from 10 years of workshop facilitation and his classroom experience. The book delves deeper into the philosophy of continuous improvement and reveals practical and highly effective classroom applications for educators.

Unique to this book, the author explains several strategies for improving knowledge retention. Specifically, readers can learn more about concepts such as the knowledge map, learning checks, monitoring progress, and accountability. Burgard explains the “teach, test, and forget” mentality that seems to plague today’s classrooms. The author shares an example to which educators can relate. Students are given a spelling list that includes words that must be learned before the test on Friday. Those words are replaced by a new list the following Monday and the information is stored in short-term memory just long enough to pass the test. No one checks to see whether the information was retained after the test. The same structure continues throughout the education process.



Your Continuous Improvement Classroom

Teachers have one thing in common—they want to see their students achieve at the highest level possible. The question of how to accomplish this great feat in today’s educational setting is answered through *The Continuous Improvement Classroom* series. Burgard, one of the authors, states it best in his introduction, “Theory without practice is interesting, but not helpful. Practice without theory is one more thing to do in an already overloaded schedule.”

Educators of all levels will appreciate the *Continuous Improvement Classroom* series. Each book provides readers with the necessary background information, examples, tools, resources, and step-by-step guidance to implement continuous improvement practices in their classrooms. The structure of the series weaves philosophy and practice together for educators to gain a complete understanding and the necessary resources to implement the continuous improvement classroom.

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Jay Marino

Jay Marino is the superintendent of the Dunlap Community Unit School District in Peoria, IL. Marino has delivered keynote presentations at local, state, national, and international conferences. He also serves as an international consultant assisting government and educational organizations in their continuous improvement efforts. Marino is the co-author of *Quality Across the Curriculum; Integrating Quality Tools and PDSA With Standards*. He serves as the K-12 systems chair of the ASQ Education Division. Marino can be contacted at jmarino@dunlapcusd.net or <http://www.jaymarino.me>.

Quality Management Education in Graduate Degrees

Anthony J. Delmonte

In the past decade, virtually every industry has embraced the need for an increased focus on quality management principles. Deming's 13th point says that organizations should "Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement."¹ Quality education was one of Crosby's basic "elements of improvement,"² and one of Joseph Juran's quality principles was training the entire management hierarchy in quality principles.³ The increased quality focus in organizations has acknowledged the educational requirements foreseen by the quality gurus and has placed an increased demand on colleges and universities.⁴ Educational institutions have not only made substantial commitments to improving quality in their processes, but have also begun including quality management education into the curriculum for both graduate and undergraduate programs.

This paper examines how effectively the inclusion of a comprehensive quality management course into graduate management curriculums is for preparing current and future managers to lead the quality management journey in their organizations. It makes use of survey-based research to evaluate changes in the attitude and behavior of working adult students after participating in a graduate-level class in quality management principles.

The scope of this research is limited, in that it focuses on the quality management courses offered in several graduate-level programs by a single university in the southeastern region of the United States. The courses were offered in the university's adult education division where the majority of students are pursuing advanced degrees to enhance or advance their management careers. The researcher is an adjunct associate professor who has taught courses in the philosophy and principles of quality management for the university for approximately five years. The research attempted to evaluate changes in the attitude and behavior of the students after participating in the class, in the following five areas:

- Leadership
- Customer focus

- Employee focus
- Statistical thinking and problem solving
- Improvement and results

The next section will explain the methodology used for the research as well as an explanation of the rationale and survey results for each of the categories identified above. That will be followed by an analysis of the results and the conclusions of the researcher.

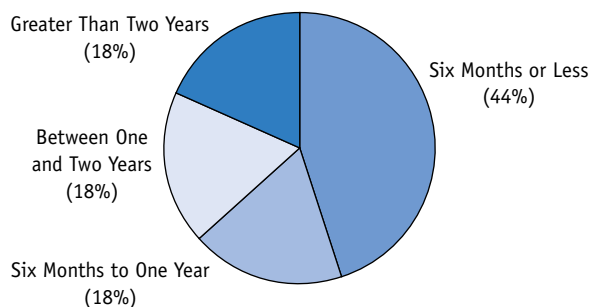
Research Methodology

The research was based on a 13-question survey using a five-point Likert scale. The first question was a screening question to determine the length of time elapsed since the student completed the quality management class, and was also used to determine if there was a correlation between the strength of the response and the length of time since the course was completed. The remaining 12 questions addressed various aspects of the five criteria under evaluation (the survey questions are listed in the online segment of this article). The survey was posted on the SurveyMonkey website for a two-month period. An invitation to participate, ensuring confidentiality, was sent via e-mail to approximately 70 students who completed the class in the past five years. The exact number of students who received the e-mail is unknown, as some e-mail addresses may have changed during the five-year period.

Twenty-nine individuals (approximately 41 percent) responded to the survey. Two of the respondents were eliminated, as their responses to the first question indicated that they either hadn't participated in the course or couldn't remember, leaving 27 (approximately 38 percent) valid responses. Twelve of the respondents (44 percent) completed the class within the previous six months. Five respondents (18 percent) fell into each of the remaining categories: six months to one year, one to two years, and greater than two years, as shown in Figure 1.

The following sections discuss the rationale for choosing each of the criteria evaluated by this research, along with the results obtained for each.

Figure 1: Length of Time Since Taking Course



Leadership

Recognizing the importance of leadership to the success of quality initiatives in organizations dates back to the writings of Deming, Juran, and Crosby. While those experts, as well as many leading quality experts today, may differ on techniques, methodologies, and tools, there is no disagreement that strong leadership from senior management on down is an absolute necessity to develop and sustain a culture of quality and excellence. It is up to the leaders in an organization to create clear and visible quality values and integrate them into the culture of the organization.³ It is then the culture of the organization that defines how readily it will embrace or resist the changes that are so important to a quality-focused organization.⁵

Questions three, four, and five addressed the leadership aspect. Question three asked respondents to evaluate whether the course helped them to better appreciate the role of leadership in implementing quality initiatives. Twenty-six respondents (96 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed that they gained a better appreciation for the role of effective leadership after taking the course.

Questions four and five asked the respondents to evaluate the impact the course made on their leadership behavior. Twenty-four respondents (89 percent) indicated that since taking the course they now view their leadership practices more critically, with the remaining 11 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Twenty-two respondents (82 percent) believed that the course helped them become a better leader, with the remaining 18 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Customer Focus

Next to leadership, an appreciation for the role and importance of customers and customer satisfaction is paramount in a quality-focused organization. Sensitizing graduate management students to the

importance of identifying internal and external customers, understanding their needs, and developing relationships with them to satisfy those needs is essential. Additionally, providing knowledge of the tools and methods for seeking and understanding voice-of-the-customer information is needed to strengthen that understanding.⁶

Question nine of the survey asked if, since taking the course, the respondents had a greater appreciation for the importance of focusing on customer needs. Twenty-five respondents (92 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed that they did, with the remaining 8 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Employee Focus

More and more, organizations focused on total quality understand that to satisfy customers, employees must be satisfied first. Particular attention must be paid to customer-contact employees, as they make up one of the fastest growing segments of the workforce, and they represent the face of the organization to the customer. A total-quality-focused organization not only ensures that the people hired possess the desired attitude and match the values of the organization, but also provides effective training to produce the intrinsic motivation needed to match the values of the organization.⁷

Question 10 asked the respondents if the course helped them gain a better appreciation for recruiting employees who share quality-related principles and values. Twenty-three respondents (85 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed, with the remaining 15 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Statistical Thinking and Problem Solving

The use of statistical methods in quality dates back to 1903 when the Bell System faced a problem designing its central offices.⁸ Most graduate management curriculums include a study of elementary statistics, but while an understanding of basic statistical concepts is essential in implementing a continuous improvement philosophy, it is not enough. In a quality management curriculum, students must learn to think statistically, meaning they must understand that all work occurs in a system of interconnected processes in which variation exists, and that understanding and reducing variation are keys to success.⁹

Questions 11 and 12 focused on statistical thinking and problem solving. Question 11 asked the respondents if the course helped to impress the importance of critical thinking. Twenty-five

Keller Independent School District's Continuous Improvement Journey

Since October of 2009, *The Journal for Quality and Participation* has reported on the Keller Independent School District's (KISD) Baldrige implementation program. In each quarterly issue, updates are provided to show the learnings and opportunities for improvement that have occurred. KISD recently achieved a major milestone when it completed its first self-assessment using the Texas Award for Performance Excellence Criteria's commitment level application. For details of this experience, go to <http://www.asq.org/pub/jqp>.

respondents (93 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed that it had, with the remaining 7 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Question 12 asked the respondents if the course changed the way they approached problem-solving situations. Twenty-two respondents (81 percent) strongly agreed or agreed that it had changed the way they approach problem solving, with the remaining 19 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Improvement and Results

The ultimate measure of the value of education in quality management principles is whether students have the ability to apply what they have learned and produce results for their organizations.

Three survey questions—six, seven, and eight—evaluated whether respondents found success in implementing one or more continuous improvement initiatives, as well as whether these initiatives provided benefits such as efficiencies or financial returns to their organizations. Specifically, question six asked if, since taking the course, the respondents had been successful in implementing one or more quality initiatives in their organization. Fourteen respondents (52 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed, eleven respondents (41 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and two respondents disagreed (7 percent).

Questions seven and eight evaluated if either the respondent's organization as a whole, or the process or function they are most closely associated with, has enjoyed benefits such as financial returns or efficiencies as a result of the knowledge gained from the course. Thirteen respondents (48 percent)

either agreed or strongly agreed that both the entire organization and the one they are most closely associated with have gained benefits. The remaining 52 percent were divided as follows: For the overall organization, 10 respondents (37 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed and four (15 percent) disagreed. For the organization the respondents were most closely associated with, 12 respondents (44 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, while two (7 percent) disagreed.

Overall Value

Two additional questions were asked to evaluate the overall perceived value of the course to the respondents. Question two asked if the respondent felt that the tools and principles learned in the course provided value in his/her job. Twenty respondents (74 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed. The remaining 26 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. Question 13 asked if the respondent believed that all managers should have access to the material provided by this course. Twenty-five respondents (93 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed, with the remaining 7 percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Analysis of Results

For analysis purposes, the survey questions were aggregated into the six categories discussed above. This aggregation used the numerical value of each Likert response (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree or disagree; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree) to calculate the mean value for each of the 27 respondents' answers to the survey questions assigned to each category. The results are displayed in Figure 2. Each category, other than "results" shows 85-percent or greater agreement that the course enhanced the respondents' appreciation for the factors deemed important in a quality-focused environment. The results category shows just over 50-percent agreement.

Figure 2: Aggregate Results by Category

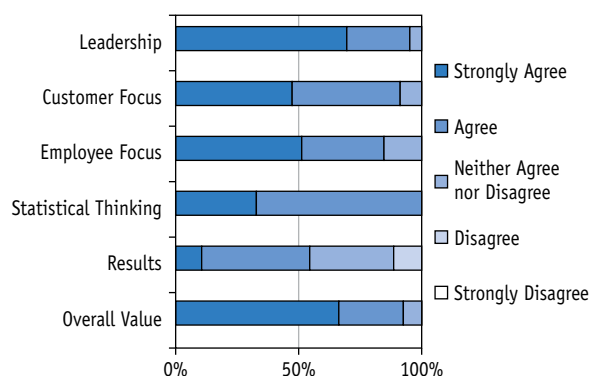
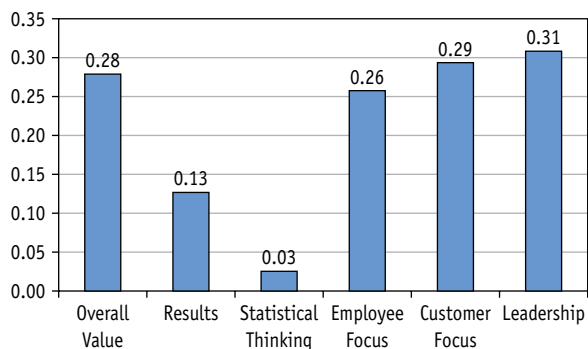


Figure 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficients



To determine if the time elapsed since the students completed the course had any effect on their ratings, the same aggregated results were correlated against the responses to question one, "How long has it been since your participation in a course in total quality management principles?" using a Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results indicate a moderate positive correlation in most areas, and are displayed in Figure 3. Regression analysis was performed to determine statistical significance. None of the correlations were significant at the 95-percent level, however; several were significant at the 80-percent level, with p-values less than .20. This lack of significance is likely due to the small sample size of 27, which was used for this analysis.

To further analyze the "results" category, the responses were separated into two groups; those who completed the course within the last six months, and those who completed it more than six months ago. For the first group, less than six months, 58 percent agreed or strongly agreed that positive results were obtained. For the second group, greater than six months, the percentage increased to 73 percent. One-factor ANOVA was used to test for significance between those who took the course longer than six months ago with those who have completed it more recently. The difference was to not be statistically significant, once again most likely due to the small sample size and distribution of the respondents.

Conclusions

As stated earlier, the scope of this study was limited. While statistical significance was not found in several of the analyses performed, the results are still directionally encouraging with respect to the value of including a course on quality management principles in graduate management curriculums.

There is opportunity for further research in this area through an expanded study into other universities and geographic areas and using larger samples of students. It is also recommended that additional studies administer the same survey before students take the course and then again after to compare results.

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More Online

Go to <http://www.asq.org/pub/jqp> to find the complete survey used for this research.



Anthony J. Delmonte

Anthony J. Delmonte is an adjunct associate professor for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's worldwide campus. He spent 18 years in senior management at the Kennedy Space Center, including four years as Lean Six Sigma deployment champion. Delmonte is an ASQ Certified Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence. You may contact him at proftony@cfl.rr.com.

Thoughts and experiences of educators related to quality and change

Supplementary Material for Educator's World: "Quality Management Education in Graduate Degrees"

Tony Delmonte provided the following survey as a supplement to his *Educator's World* article. It includes both the introductory letter to potential respondents as well as the actual survey questions and response options. The responses received from this survey form the basis for his print article.

The Usefulness of Including a Quality Management Course as a Part of a Graduate Management Curriculum

Background

This survey is a part of a research project to investigate the impact that the inclusion of a course in total quality management principles into a graduate management curriculum has on the attitude and work behavior of students. The results of the research will provide important insight into how effective TQM education is in training the leaders of tomorrow.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the responses of all individual participants is guaranteed. Individual responses will be used solely for the purpose of grouping summary results and will not be communicated in any way or included in the final research report.

Questions

You may direct any questions or comments regarding this survey to the researcher:

Dr. Anthony J. Delmonte
1134 Key Largo Circle
Port Orange, FL 32128
386-760-1719
proftony@cfl.rr.com

Directions for Completing the Survey

This survey consists of 13 questions and should take no longer than five minutes to complete. Please highlight your answers to all questions and e-mail the completed survey to proftony@cfl.rr.com.

Thank you for your participation in this important research project.

1. How long has it been since your participation in a course in TQM principles?

Six Months or Less	Six Months to One Year	Between One and Two Years	More Than Two Years	Never Participated or Don't Remember
1	2	3	4	5

If you answered 5 to the above question, then please discard this survey, otherwise, select the most appropriate response to the following questions:

2. The tools and principles learned in the class have been valuable to me in my job:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. Since taking this course, I have a greater appreciation for leadership's role in successfully implementing quality initiatives:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. Since taking this course, I view my own leadership practices more critically:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. Since taking this course I believe I have become a more effective leader:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. Since taking this course I have been successful in implementing one or more quality-related initiatives:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. The process or function that I am most closely associated with has enjoyed benefits, in terms of efficiencies or financial returns, from the knowledge I have gained from this course:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. This organization or business unit as a whole has enjoyed benefits, in terms of efficiencies or financial returns, from the knowledge that I have gained from this course:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. Since taking this course, I have a greater appreciation for the importance of focusing on customer needs:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. Since taking this course, I have a greater appreciation for the importance of recruiting employees who share quality-related principles and values:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. This course has impressed the importance of statistical thinking on me:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. This course has changed the way that I approach problem-solving situations:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. I believe every leader/manager should be exposed to the material offered in this course:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Thoughts and experiences of educators related to quality and change

An Update—Keller ISD Leaps Forward

Shellie Johnson and Paula Sommer

The Keller Independent School District (KIDS) reached another milestone on its Baldrige journey. KISD's cabinet completed its first self-assessment using the Texas Award for Performance Excellence Criteria's commitment level application (www.texas-quality.org/). This 15-page summary was sent to Quality Texas for review by trained state examiners who will provide third-party insight.

Baldrige Learning at the Cabinet Level

We found that completing the commitment level application helped us in several ways, as follows.

- We learned more about the language of the criteria. This helped us to probe deeper into our use of the seven components/categories to guide our systemic work.
- We gained a deeper appreciation for having more specific deployment plans.
- We renewed our focus on doing and evaluating with measures and results.

We always have been an action-oriented district, but now we see more opportunities. We keep our eyes not only on our target, but also on our progress and specifically selected measures as we move toward reaching and exceeding our goals. We also renewed our commitment of communicating the process and reporting the results that we achieved. The bottom line is that we created a document to provide more details about who we are, where we are going, and what is necessary to get us there. In the end, we celebrated all the wonderful things that have happened and where we are going in the future.

Baldrige Learning at the Administrative Level

Our Baldrige advisory implementation leadership team continued its work on gaining greater understanding of our continuous improvement cycle, plan, do, study, act (PDSA). Monthly peer-to-peer training continues to occur with four groups: district administrators, learning function, elementary principals, and secondary principals.

Each month our sessions build on the prior months' work to connect the Baldrige concepts to the everyday work of the administrative group. We now have started a conversation on how to use the approach, deployment, learning, integration (ADLI) approach in our Baldrige work as a tool for gleaning the nuggets from our many PDSAs. As we review our learning and then examine the results, we learn to evaluate what we should take to the systemic level. We ask, "Considering the steps we just completed, is there any part that is worthy now to be included in our overall approach and deployment on other actions or initiatives?" The result is that we are building and managing our knowledge on how to help each organizational level change.

Baldrige Learning at the Campus/Teacher Level

Our 33 campus-based pilot teams of teachers investigate and learn about PDSAs and embedding quality practices in their work with students. We continue to progress as we focus on making our work practical and developing how to introduce the methods campus wide. Our goal is to have "teachers teaching teachers" about how quality processes work and how they help accelerate students taking ownership of their learning.

Leah Beard, KISD's Baldrige instructional coach, led a discussion where the breakout groups explained, "what Baldrige is" in their own words. Flip chart notes from the two groups are shown below.

Breakout Group One

- Mindset change.
- Data integrated into and through the process.
- Interactive.
- Journey.
- Student driven.
- Systematic.
- Data organizer.
- Student input.
- Multi-step journey.

Breakout Group Two

- A process involving parents and students in decision making.
- Collecting and utilizing data.
- Working collaboratively.
- An intentional process of planning and implementing different strategies to achieve your goal.



Shellie Johnson

Shellie Johnson, communications director for Keller Independent School District, has worked in public relations/marketing and broadcasting. In addition to her time spent with several chambers of commerce, she was vice president of communications for the Frisco RoughRiders, an affiliate of the Texas Rangers. She also spent more than 10 years as a television news reporter and anchor. For more information on the Keller Independent School District, contact her at shellie.johnson@kellerisd.net.



Paula Sommer

Paula Brooks Sommer is the owner of Dynamic WorkSystems in Arlington, TX. A long-time supporter of the Malcolm Baldrige program, she's served as a national examiner and is involved with the Texas state program based on the Baldrige criteria. Sommer works with school districts to use the Baldrige framework to accelerate continuous improvement. She is a recipient of the Ishikawa Medal and is an ASQ Fellow. Contact her at 817-461-1218 or texaspaula2@tx.rr.com.

Workers retain skills
and knowledge better
when coached after
training.

Coaching as an Approach to Enhance Performance

Eman Salman Taie

The future of healthcare organizations is tied to their investment in human capital. Organizational outcomes are always achieved through the strength of the workforce, thereby making workforce engagement and learning a top organizational priority. Education and training alone are not enough to produce the results that organizations need to remain competitive. For this reason, coaching is an educational technique that bridges the gap between learning and practice or between training and the workplace.^{1,2}

Coaching is defined as the art and practice of inspiring, energizing, and facilitating the performance, learning, and development of the coachee. It is an art because when the coach is fully engaged with the coachee, the process of coaching becomes a dance between two people, conversationally moving in complete harmony and partnership.

Coaching helps the coachee to unlock his/her true potential through raising awareness, inspiring new ideas, and encouraging creativity. Coaching is energizing the player through effective communication, soliciting suggestions, and building a can-do attitude. It also involves facilitating the exploration of needs, motivations, desires, skills, and thought processes to assist the individual in making real, lasting change and building high performance systems and structures.^{3,4,5} Most coaches would agree that coaching is a unique and individually-tailored intervention that enables individuals to explore and address real-life challenges and to develop his/her vision and sense of purpose.⁶

The research reported in this article was conducted in a teaching hospital to assess the effectiveness of training and subsequent coaching of nurses in life-support skills. It was hypothesized that



coaching would improve the retention of newly acquired skills. The methodology for this research included developing three data collection tools, creating and delivering two training programs, and fielding before and after assessments of the training and coaching.

The Setting

El-Nasr Hospital is affiliated with the health insurance sector in the Helwan governorate of Egypt and is used by the student nurses at Helwan University for their clinical practice. During an administrative visit to the hospital, a problem with the management of cardiac arrest cases was observed. The author is certified by the American Heart Association in basic and advanced cardiac life support, so the hospital's manager asked for the author's assistance in providing CPR training to the nursing staff.

While planning for this training, additional research was proposed regarding the usefulness of coaching. Two different groups of activities were identified: training and coaching. The success of both would be measured through a series of assessment tools.

Before beginning this work, administrative and ethical aspects of the research were considered and plans made. Letters explaining the aim of the research were sent from the author to the hospital's director and also to the nursing director to obtain their permission and help to conduct the research. The author then met the hospital directors and the nursing directors to explain the purpose and methods of data collection for the research. The author also obtained the subjects' verbal approval after explaining the purpose and method of data collection for the research. Confidentiality of subjects' responses was assured.

Planning and Assessment Tool Development

Three different data collection tools were developed. The first was a questionnaire to assess nurses' knowledge about basic life support. This assessment tool was developed by the

author with guidance from the AHA. A maximum score of 20 was possible, with three defined levels of achievement:

- Low: 0 to 11 points
- Moderate: 12 to 16 points
- High: 17 to 20 points

The second assessment tool was a competency skill test designed to assess nurses' ability to perform basic life-support skills. Again, this was developed by the author with guidance from the AHA. A maximum score of 100 was possible, with three defined levels of achievement:

- Low: 0 to 59 points
- Moderate: 60 to 84 points
- High: 85 to 100 points

Finally, a questionnaire was developed to assess what the head nurses and charge nurses knew about coaching. To prepare this research tool, a literature search (discussed in the supplementary materials provided online) was conducted to learn more about coaching. The questionnaire probed understanding about the definition of coaching, the role of the coach, the required skills and characteristics of good coaches, the difference between coaches and bosses, and the benefits of good coaching.

Pilot Study and Initial Assessments

Once the assessment tools were prepared, a pilot study was conducted to evaluate the assessment

Table 1: Staff nurses' knowledge and performance before and after CPR training

Items	Participants' scores before training (n=120)		Participants' scores post training (n=120)		Z test	P value
	No.	%	No.	%		
Knowledge						
• Low score	104	87	0	0	13.6	<0.001
• Moderate score	16	13	29	24	2.2	<0.05
• High score	0	0	91	76	12.1	<0.001
Skills						
• Low score	112	93	0	0	14.4	<0.001
• Moderate score	8	7	13	11	1.1	>0.05
• High score	0	0	107	89	13.9	<0.001

tools' practicability and estimate the time needed to complete each tool. A group of 36 staff nurses was selected for testing the questionnaire format and competency skill test for basic life support. On average, the questionnaire took 30 minutes to complete, and the competency skill test required 45 minutes. Two head nurses and three charge nurses were selected to take the coaching questionnaire, which required 30-45 minutes to complete. All responses became part of the total research study sample.

After the successful pilot study, the tools assessing basic life-support skills were given to 120 staff nurses in El-Nasr hospital. The coaching questionnaire was given to 12 head nurses and 48 charge nurses (two from each shift in each department), plus the nursing director of the hospital.

Training and Coaching

The results of the basic life-support skills assessments were used to define the training needs and develop the training program.

The training program for nursing staff was conducted in May and June of 2008 and included a special one-day session for nursing supervisors, the nursing director, head nurses, and charge nurses to involve them so that they could serve as coaches later in the process. The author and one other AHA certified trainer conducted the sessions.

The results of the coaching questionnaire were used to develop and conduct an awareness session, which was given to half of the head nurses and charge nurses. This session included

Table 2: Head nurses' and charge nurses' knowledge and awareness related to coaching, measured before and after training session

Items	Before awareness session (n=61)		After awareness session (n=120)		Z test	P value
	No.	%	No.	%		
Coaching Definition						
• Complete definition	0	0	57	94	10.4	<0.001
• Incomplete definition	7	12	4	6	1.2	>0.05
• Wrong definition	20	33	0	0	4.9	<0.001
• Do not know	34	55	0	0	6.8	<0.001
Role of the Coach						
• Complete activities	1	1	54	89	9.8	<0.001
• Incomplete activities	5	8	7	11	0.6	>0.05
• Wrong activities	13	21	0	0	3.8	<0.001
• Do not know	42	70	0	0	8.1	<0.001
Characteristics of a Good Coach						
• Complete	7	12	54	89	8.5	<0.001
• Incomplete	15	25	4	7	2.7	<0.01
• Do not know	39	63	3	4	6.9	<0.001
Required Skills for Coach						
• Complete	4	7	59	97	9.9	<0.001
• Incomplete	13	22	2	3	3.2	<0.01
• Do not know	44	71	0	0	8.2	<0.001
Differences Between Coach and Boss						
• Complete	0	0	56	92	10.2	<0.001
• Incomplete	15	24	5	8	2.4	<0.01
• Do not know	46	76	0	0	8.6	<0.001
Benefits of Coaching						
• Complete	4	7	57	94	9.6	<0.001
• Incomplete	17	28	4	6	3.2	<0.01
• Do not know	40	65	0	0	7.7	<0.001

information about the definition of coaching, the role of the coach, the required skills and characteristics for a good coach, the differences between a boss and a coach, and the benefits of coaching.

Half of the staff nurses in the study received coaching from the head nurses and charge nurses who had completed this training.

All three assessment tools were re-administered immediately after training to assess the effectiveness of the training and again after four months to assess the effectiveness of the coaching.

In addition, over the course of the three months following training, the researcher intermittently observed the coaches in their units, watching to see how they applied their new roles as coach.

Statistical Analysis and Results

SPSS statistical software was used to perform the data analysis. The Z test for comparing two proportions of categorized data was used. Probabilities of 0.05 (e.g., 5 percent) and less were considered significant, while probabilities at 0.01 and 0.001 were considered highly significant.

Prior to training, the majority of the staff nurses had low scores in knowledge (87 percent) and skills (93 percent) and no one earned a high score. After training, the majority of the staff nurses earned high scores in knowledge (76 percent) and skills (89 percent) and no one had a low score. This change was highly significant as shown in Table 1.

Before the training, most of the head nurses and charge nurses were not aware of the definition (55 percent) and roles (70 percent) of a coach, and almost nobody had a complete understanding. After training, the situation was reversed, with most knowing the complete definition (94 percent) and roles (89 percent) of coaching. Knowledge of the required skills and characteristics of a good coach also improved significantly with training, as did knowledge of the differences between coach and

Table 3: Coached and not coached staff nurses' knowledge and skills four months after training

Items	Coached staff nurses (n=60)		Not Coached staff nurses (n=60)		Z test	P value
	No.	%	No.	%		
Knowledge						
• Low score	2	4	11	18	2.5	<0.01
• Moderate score	8	13	41	69	6.2	<0.001
• High score	50	83	8	13	7.7	<0.001
Skills						
• Low score	1	1	14	24	3.8	<0.001
• Moderate score	5	9	43	71	6.9	<0.001
• High score	54	90	3	5	9.3	<0.001

Table 4: Coaches' roles as observed by the researcher

Coaches' Roles (n=60 Coaching Relationships Observed)	No.	%
Make sure that the training ties in as closely as possible with job performance in the work place.	55	91.7
Organize the workplace in such a way that it encourages the implementation of job skills that have been learned.	52	86.7
Give instructions for application.	57	95.0
Determine the desired performance levels.	55	91.7
Follow up on what has been learned.	58	96.7
Give feedback about competencies.	56	93.3

boss and the benefits of coaching. The impact of this training is shown in Table 2.

After four months, the staff nurses were retested and the results for those who received coaching were compared to the results of those who were not coached. The majority of the coached staff earned high scores in knowledge (83 percent) and in skills (90 percent). On the other hand, only 13 percent of the staff who did not receive coaching had high scores in knowledge and only 5 percent earned high scores in skills. This is a highly significant difference as shown in Table 3.

The coaching relationships developed in stages over the four months of observation. The first stage was formal, in which both the coach and coachee

explored each other's competencies in their new relationship. Then, it evolved into a more cordial stage in which the two parties got to know each other better and learned to cooperate more effectively. Finally, they entered a friendship stage characterized by friendship and trust. Coaching observations are summarized in Table 4. Most of the coaches were able to assimilate and apply all of the key coaching behaviors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the research findings, before training more than 50 percent of head nurses and charge nurses were not aware of the complete definition and roles of the coach, the differences between coach and boss, benefits of the coach, and the required skills and characteristics of good coach. After training, this percentage improved to 0 percent for five of the six aspects of coaching, and to under 5 percent for the sixth aspect. As coaches, these nurses contributed to the highly significant improvement ($p < 0.001$) in knowledge and skill retention after training in basic life support for those staff nurses who received coaching versus those who did not. This improvement has equally important implications for patient health and survival rates.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Conduct training and educational programs for managers on how to serve as coaches.
- Introduce the coaching approach as a step toward organizational change to bridge the gap between learning and practice.
- Conduct further research on the effect of the coach on quality of patient care in nursing.

Based on this research, which substantiates claims that coaching improves performance, it is to the benefit of all organizations to develop leaders who are also capable coaches.

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More Online

Background information on coaching—coaching basics, the benefits of coaching, coaching in nursing, and leaders as coaches—is discussed in the online portion of this article, which can be found at <http://www.asq.org/pub/jqp>.



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Supplementary Material for “Coaching as an Approach to Enhance Performance”

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The research reported in the print portion of this article could not have been completed without a thorough understanding of coaching on the part of the researcher. This knowledge was obtained through a literature search that looked at several aspects of coaching: the basics of coaching, including its benefits; prior research that focused on coaching in nursing; and the role of leaders as coaches. The coaching questionnaire and awareness training were designed to incorporate what was learned and to provide the new nurse-coaches with the tools to coach effectively.

As with learning any new discipline, a basic overview of coaching was needed.

Coaching Basics

Coaching achieves a balance between fulfilling organizational goals and objectives while taking into account employees' personal development needs. It is a two-way relationship with both the organization and the employee gaining significant benefits,^{1,2} and has emerged as a cornerstone of learning organizations in which the development of people is a high priority. The success of people-centric environments derives from the realization that the future of the organization depends on its ability to develop the performance capabilities of its workforce. Successful organizations are the product of leaders who communicate a clear and compelling vision for the future and make it a priority to equip their people with the tools they need to achieve results.³ Effective managers and astute leaders are aware that day-to-day feedback regarding performance is one of the best methods for improving work performance and building a team approach.^{4,5}

Coaching is an expanding professional development approach that works with individuals or groups to help them maximize their potential and skills, while enabling them to become more productive, effective, and creative. Coaching has particular benefits within the workplace, as creativity and innovation are keys to the success of dynamic and successful organizations. Within

healthcare, coaching can assist professionals to cope with and steer the increasingly complex, multi-faceted, and changing organizations that are characteristic of contemporary health services.^{6,7,8} The challenge to develop effective nursing leaders is common in many countries.⁹ The International Coach Federation¹⁰ emphasized the need to develop new ways of working that involve every team member being engaged in improving care and modernizing services. Effective leadership was identified as of paramount importance, together with recognizing the need for lifelong learning and continuing professional development, which is specific to the role and responsibilities of individuals.¹¹

The Benefits of Coaching

Coaching is typically viewed as a means of developing people within an organization to help them perform more effectively and reach their potential.^{9,12,13} Coaching serves many purposes, such as providing people with feedback on both their strengths and weaknesses, offering assistance to employees in executing job tasks, providing learning moments, focusing on improving performance, developing/enhancing individual skills, and addressing current and future performance/behavior.^{14,15} This is a matter for both the coach and the coachee; they constitute a study group to analyze the various characteristics of job and task execution and draw a step-by-step approach to overcome any obstacles in the workplace.¹⁶ The key purpose of coaching is to help the coachee attain outcomes that are valued and meaningful.¹⁷ Coaching is a long-term strategy, but the benefits of managerial coaching are two way. It improves employee performance and promotes greater enthusiasm and greater job satisfaction. For managers, it improves communication, motivation, delegation, employee empowerment, and skills for planning and monitoring.^{18,19}

Coaching empowers people to take responsibility for themselves and make necessary changes in their professional and personal lives. It promotes the view that the goals of organizational effectiveness

and personal fulfillment are not incompatible; that the one supports the other. Coaching has been found to positively affect leadership, increasing charismatic behaviors and the ability to inspire and impact followers.^{20,21} As a supervisor, it is important to realize that coaching will not only help the deficient employee, but also may inspire good workers to become outstanding. Managers must do more than motivate if they are to succeed in improving an employee's performance.²²

The direct involvement of leaders in the coaching process communicates their commitment to employee development and is evidence of their dedication to performance excellence.^{23,24} The coaching system moves the individual from current thinking, behaviors, and performance to expanded thinking and enhanced performance and toward a more integrated self, sustainable development, and success.¹⁶ Coaching is the process that enables learning and development to occur and thus allows performance to improve. To achieve success as a coach requires a knowledge and understanding of process as well as the variety of styles, skills, and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place.^{18,19,25,26}

Many organizations use coaching to enhance performance rather than to rectify a performance issue. Coaching is a highly successful intervention in these cases. When an organization is paying premium rates for development services, performance is usually the key payback they seek.²⁷ The opportunities for coaching in healthcare are numerous. Whether used for individual, team, or whole organization development, coaching gets results that contribute to the bottom line. Coaching is a means by which the workforce develops the tools necessary to achieve success, and is therefore an investment in the future of the organization.^{3,17,28}

Coaching in Nursing

The nursing profession needs leaders who can inspire and motivate others and act as role models. With coaching a relatively new intervention, research on its effects is minimal. However, a small qualitative study by Ponte et al.²⁹ found that nursing leaders who had experienced coaching described it as an effective way to identify, explore, and correct behaviors that hampered their performance, which helped them to improve their effectiveness and that of their organization

as a whole. Organizational effectiveness, however, is dependent on the quality of leadership that exists at all levels.³⁰

Coaching in sports, business, psychology, and, more recently, in nursing demonstrates positive results in motivating people toward attaining personal and professional goals.³¹ Coaching is a new and rapidly expanding professional development approach that works with individuals or groups to help them maximize their potential and skills and enables them to become more productive, effective, and creative.³² Bunting and Mooney³³ and Driscoll et al.³⁴ emphasized that coaching empowers people to take responsibility for themselves and make necessary changes in their professional and personal lives. This was supported by Kenny and Faunce¹⁴ and Wright³⁵ who asserted that the coach encourage, support, and provide timely feedback, allowing the client to grow and excel, build on his or her strengths and resources, and develop accountability in decision making directed toward goal attainment. This coincides with Locke's³ findings which demonstrate that the role of any leader is to challenge and support people or teams to achieve higher levels of performance.

Coaches are required to demonstrate that they are strong clinical leaders who embody the best of nursing practice based on the extensive knowledge they have gained from experience and study. Their ability to lead and influence the reasoning of colleagues in the patient's best interest depends on authoritative clinical knowledge and wisdom, the ability to listen and enhance others' strengths, and the conviction to act as a moral agent.^{36,37} Additionally, Mantzoukas and Watkinson³⁸ and Morton and Palmer³⁹ advocate that coaching is the supportive exchange of instructions, advice, and positive feedback that is necessary to develop effective clinical skills and abilities.

Kowalski and Casper²⁸ assert that coaching skills are based on the principles of developmental psychology. Coaching competencies fall largely into the domain of interpersonal skills and include the capacity to ask thought-provoking questions, the ability to listen actively, and the authenticity to share valuable observations without generating defensiveness. This is consistent with Stober et al.³⁸ and Locke³ who state that technical competencies enhance a coach's credibility with the learner. It is the coach's ability to form collaborative relationships that foster trust

and receptivity to feedback that is vital to the learning process. This is supported by Wright,³⁵ Hayes,⁴⁰ and the International Coach Federation,¹⁰ who assert that effective coaching requires the coach to practice vitally important interpersonal communication skills to facilitate client learning and development. Moreover, the coach's capacity to listen is central to the coaching process. These findings are also supported by Gross,⁴¹ Hadikin,⁴² and Stober,⁴³ who state that successful coaches clearly communicate expectations, provide feedback, and remain fair and equitable. The essential qualities that coaches must bring to the coaching process include warmth, empathy, optimism, and a belief in change and possibility.^{44,45}

Leaders as Coaches

Many people are not aware of key differences between coaches and bosses. Goleman,⁴⁶ Witherspoon,⁴⁷ Goodman,⁴⁸ and Hayes and Kalmakis⁴⁹ state that coach-leaders provide feedback and encouragement as they help employees identify the unique strengths and weakness they bring to their work, establish goals, and develop plans for reaching them. This was supported by Ponte et al.,²⁹ who asserted that the coach-leader focuses on the development of the person within the work, assisting him/her to improve performance and succeed. This was in contrast with Hayes and Kalmakis⁴⁹ who stated that a boss focuses only on the function of the team or the vision of the company. Meanwhile, Driscoll³⁴ found that within a coaching relationship, the coach develops a vision of what he/she wishes to achieve, understands the key issues involved in the situation, considers the options that are available to him/her, and makes better and more informed decisions about the actions that need to be taken and how to overcome challenges. In this respect, the International Coach Federation¹⁰ emphasized that coach-leaders help employees to produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives, improve their performance, and enhance the quality of their lives. This was in contrast with Hayes and Kalmakis,⁴⁹ who stated that a boss seeks control, gives orders, and keeps distance.

As a manager it is important to realize that coaching not only helps the deficient employee but also inspires the good worker to become outstanding.^{5,28} Creativity and innovation have particular benefits within the workplace because

they are keys to the success of dynamic and successful organizations. This is supported by the findings of Gordon and Spence⁵⁰ and Haidar⁵¹ who found that 85 percent of managers identify the main values as enhancing team morale, and 80 percent stated that it generated responsibility on the part of the learner. Furthermore, Bennett and Craig⁶ concluded that coaching aims at improving performance and developing a particular competence. It is the focused application of skills through robust support and challenge that delivers performance improvement to the executive's work in his/her organization.

The purpose of coaching is to help the coachee attain outcomes that are valued and meaningful.¹⁷ Moreover, the direct involvement of leaders in the coaching process communicates their commitment to employee development and is evidence of their dedication to performance excellence.^{3,52} This is supported by Driscoll and Cooper³⁴ who assert that performance coaching assists in developing particular behaviors that will enhance performance. This was consistent with Meretoja,⁵³ Mantzoukas and Watkinson,⁵⁴ and Mackie¹⁵ who found that productivity increased from 22 percent to 88 percent by using a coaching approach. This was similar to Gomez⁵⁵ and Hayes and Kalmakis⁴⁹ who found that outcomes associated with coaching intervention were improved. In addition, Kampa,²³ Berard,²⁴ Kowalski and Casper,²⁸ and Mackie¹⁵ found that for today's hospital-based managers to succeed, he or she has to fill the roles of mentor, role model, facilitator, supervisor, coach, and all-around superior being.

Coaching Results

For the purposes of researching the impact of coaching on nurses, six key coaching roles and behaviors were identified and emphasized:

- Tie training closely to job performance.
- Encourage use of newly learned job skills through appropriate workplace organization.
- Provide clear instructions.
- Determine desired performance levels.
- Follow up on learning.
- Give feedback, especially about competencies.

Collectively, these roles and behaviors helped the nurses who received coaching to retain significantly more of what they had learned than the nurses who were not coached.

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Change...Not Again!!

Elizabeth Keim

Change is a topic of many conversations, a source of hours of contemplation, and a cause of much heartburn and loss of sleep. There's no denying, however, that change is a fact of life and business for everyone.

Change always seems like such a good idea until you try to implement it. It doesn't even really matter what kind of change you are talking about; they are all hard. It is true of any improvement activity that the "people" stuff, often referred to as the soft stuff, is the hard stuff.

Think about all of the changes you have been through in your life—from moves; marriages and births; job changes; weather changes; life-style changes such as weight loss, smoking cessation, and exercise program changes; to the change from daylight savings time to standard time. None are undertaken without some notice and impact.

There are several important things to try to remember about change:

- Change is hard for everyone, but it is harder for some than others. The best you can do is help people see the up side—what is in it for them. You have to make these benefits as specific as possible. This won't always be enough, but if you keep emphasizing the benefits for each individual it will help. Don't forget that focusing on the benefits of the change may cause the acceptance period to take a bit longer, but it has more staying power as a motivator than the threats associated with not changing.

Growing up with my dad in the military, we moved frequently, at least every three years. By the time I was 21 years old, I had lived in 22 different homes. It was never easy, but it wasn't always bad either. It was interesting that the moves were always easier on mom and us kids than they were on dad, even though they were related to his job.

On the other hand, I don't do very well with the whole issue of health management, including weight loss and exercise. This one is much harder for me than just moving to a new house. I would

rather move bodies, even if I had to pack organs, knowledge, and everything. It is all about how people prioritize things. Some changes are harder than others, and you don't realize what changes are hard for which people. You never know what additional stressors people might be dealing with at the time.

- It is impossible to over communicate about a change—whether it is the direction or the specific actions that are needed. Communications are required by those who are leading as well as those who have adopted the path forward. People only hear part of the message—the part they are ready to hear—each time the message is given. It takes a while for the entire message to gain acceptance.

People generally fear uncertainty more than they fear the certainty of the worst possible outcome, not knowing makes planning for the future far more difficult. People talk about "survivors guilt" in organizations that experience layoffs. A big part of this guilt problem is that the people didn't know if they are "safe" or "safe until...." I remember relaxing on Fridays with colleagues from a local company that was laying off people regularly. The survivors' discussion primarily focused on how much longer they might be employed; they were not optimistic conversations. On the other hand, those who were let go were happier that the uncertainty was over; they could move forward, make plans, and take control of their lives. People generally like certainty and the ability to make plans for the future. The more you communicate, the easier it is for people to plan for the future.

- The harder you push a change, the more resistance you might encounter. Even if the change is perfectly logical to you and the new way is certainly easier than the old way, people are always more comfortable with the old way. I can't understand what makes people happy doing twice the amount of work required simply

because that is the way they have always done it. Even after a short pilot showing that the work is easier when using the new way, people generally want to return to the normal way. There is something comforting about doing things the same old way. Why is it so much easier to keep doing the same thing when it is clear that doing things differently would be beneficial? If I knew the answer to this question, I wouldn't be a bit overweight, still trying to learn Spanish, still working on my taxes, slightly out of shape, and looking at a large stack of business books to read!

In the best of all worlds, it would be easy to implement the changes that are logical. Unfortunately, logic isn't enough of a motivator—although if you communicate the benefits and the plan often enough, the message will start to penetrate. Think about WeightWatchers®, one of the most successful long-term weight loss programs. The program is built on regular communication and a weekly weigh in. This approach focuses on the notion that change may be hard. You need to hang in there, keeping the change plan in the front of your mind and trying to diffuse resistance by remembering that the process is working for others.

I wish I knew the perfect answer for implementing change. If I did, I would be a different person. I would have changed several things about myself.

I wouldn't be perfect, but I would be much better. The important thing about change is that you have to work on it—not just think about—every day, in every conversation and action. You have to be persistent and have constancy of purpose. You have to stay focused on the change much longer than you expect to ensure the change really happens, so plan on being in it for the long haul.



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Elizabeth (Liz) Keim is a managing partner at Integrated Quality Resources in Boulder, CO. She works with clients on business results improvement through the integration of methodologies such as lean, Six Sigma, and the Baldrige Award criteria. During a 17-year career at IBM Global Services in technical and management positions, Keim was responsible for quality program strategy, development, and implementation. Following that, she was a global commercial quality leader at GE Plastics, where she implemented Six Sigma in the company's worldwide non-manufacturing processes. Keim is a past chair of ASQ. She is an ASQ Fellow and an Academician with the International Academy for Quality. Contact Keim at liz.keim@comcast.net.

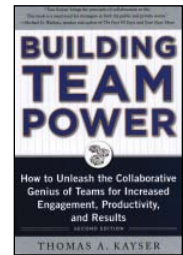
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Author: Jack Nadel

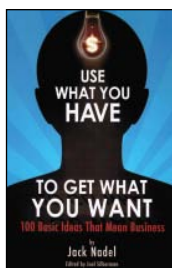
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Author: Jean Harvey

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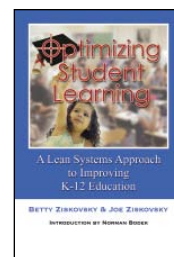
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