

ASQ Lower Rio Grande Valley Section 1425 Newsletter

May 28, 2009
Volume 1, Issue 6

Special Interest Articles:

- Quality Assurance and Quality Control
- Customer Satisfaction
- Effective Time Management
- FREE Healthcare Webinar Series (continued)
- Meet Your Officers / Committee Chairs
- Variation

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

ASQ Knowledge Center

The terms "quality assurance" and "quality control" are often used interchangeably to refer to ways of ensuring the quality of a service or product. The terms, however, have different meanings.

- **Assurance:** The act of giving confidence, the state of being certain or the act of making certain.
Quality assurance: The planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled.

- **Control:** An evaluation to indicate needed corrective responses; the act of guiding a process in which variability is attributable to a constant system of chance causes.
Quality control: The observation techniques and activities used to fulfill requirements for quality.

Customer Satisfaction

Organizations of all types and sizes have come to realize that their main focus must be to satisfy their customers. This applies to industrial firms, retail and wholesale businesses, government bodies, service companies, nonprofit organizations and every subgroup within an organization.

Two important questions:

1. Who are the customers?
2. What does it take to satisfy them?

Who Are the Customers?

Customers include anyone the organization supplies with products or services (Note that many organizations are simultaneously customers and suppliers).

What Does It Take to Satisfy Customers?

Don't assume you know what the customer wants. There are many examples of errors in this area, such as "new Coke" and car models that didn't sell. Many organizations expend considerable time, money and effort determining the "voice" of the customer, using tools such as customer surveys, focus groups and polling.

Satisfying the customer includes providing what is needed when it's needed. In many situations, it's up to the customer to provide the supplier with requirements. For example, the payroll department should inform other departments of the exact format for reporting the numbers of hours worked by employees. If the payroll department doesn't do this job properly, it bears some responsibility for the variation in reporting that will occur.

Excerpted from Donald W. Benbow, Ahmad K. Elshennawy and H. Fred Walker, *The Certified Quality Technician Handbook*, ASQ Quality Press, 2003, pages 1-2. <http://www.asq.org/quality-press/display-item/index.html?item=H1146>

Tips for Effective Time Management

By Shirley Lee

It can be hard to find the time you need to do everything. Consider doing a few key things instead of trying to do everything. Start with these 5 simple ideas for managing time: writing things down, prioritizing tasks, reviewing appointments, blocking out time for getting things done, and remaining flexible in your plans. Following are these five ideas (tips to make your planning more effective can be found at sites listed at the bottom).

1. Write down everything you need to do in the same tool.
2. Review your tasks and prioritize the items at the same time each day.
3. Look at your list of appointments for the day and determine which are important to do on this day.
4. Schedule blocks of time in your day to work on your to-do list.
5. Allow for flexibility in your schedule. In other words, don't over-schedule.

Printed and referenced here with permission from Shirley Lee.

See more details and articles at <http://www.shirleyfinelee.com>

<http://www.dallasastd.org/news/ASTD/Articles/0508-3.htm>

From Knowledge Center at ASQ.org

"Think like a person of action. Act like a person of thought."
—Howard Behar (b. 1946)

FREE Healthcare Webinar Series

ASQ is offering a free webinar on how to measure the effectiveness of a healthcare organization's continuous improvement initiatives. The webinar, titled *Mapping and Measuring a Culture of Continuous Improvement in Healthcare Delivery: What Is True North?*, is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. CDT, and sponsored by Statit Software, a leader in continuous performance improvement solutions for healthcare. Details on ASQ E-mail dated 5/15.

Meet Your Officers / Committee Chairs

ASQ 1425, 2009-2010 by Sylvia Garcés Soria

On April 23, 2009, we held our monthly meeting at UTPA and elected officers. ASQ 1425 Officer/Committee list has been submitted to ASQ Headquarters.

The list is as follows:

NAME	POSITION
Sylvia Garcés Soria	Chair
Perfecto Villarreal	Chair-Elect
Ramon Villarreal	Secretary
Oscar Leal	Treasurer, & Nominating Committee Chair
Darnell Jordan	Auditing Chair
Julio C. Garcia	Certification Chair
Wagih Wazni	Education Chair
Doug Monroe	Internet Liaison (Web Master)
Julio Salinas	Membership Chair
Hale Kaynak	Newsletter Editor
Chair Rotation Program Chair position will be rotated among Officers and Committee Chairs Contact: Sylvia Garcés Soria Soria07@aol.com To present your topic	Program Chair
Roz Moore	Recertification & SMP Chair

Message from our Chair Officer

Sylvia Garcés Soria, 5/25/2009

Attendance of Leadership Community before WCQI

I attended the Leadership Community activities on Saturday, May 16. Stephen Hacker gave us insights on Transformational Leadership. We were also updated on ASQ's involvement in Social Responsibility. We selected sessions of interest to attend. One session involved social media networks and who is using them within ASQ. Many ASQ members or groups are on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Are you? If you are, let us know.

To highlight the day, we were recognized for the Total Quality Award and the Silver Excellence Award.

WCQI

Coffee, ice cream, and cookies...oh my. The keynote speakers all worked or founded companies related to these food items:

- Coffee – **Howard Behar**, *Former President, Starbucks North America and Starbucks International*, spoke about his experience of managing a few coffee shops to managing Starbucks coffee shops in an international market. His focus and name of his book – IT'S NOT ABOUT THE COFFEE reminds us that people are what make a company great.
- Ice Cream - Jerry **Greenfield**, *Co-founder of Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.*, reflected on the early days of his partnership with Ben and how Ben was different in his style of doing business. They were turned down many times for initial loans, etc. They never gave up and did their own thing.
- Cookies - **Wally Amos**, *Founder, Famous Amos Cookie Company* shared how his lack of focus caused him to lose Famous Amos Cookies. Now he still sells cookies under another brand. He read a children's book about a box of crayons. The crayons at first did not like each other. After some thought, they understood and accepted each other. He spoke about his commitment to adult literacy and about helping make the world a better place.

There were conferences within conferences.

Among the sessions I attended were the ISO 9001:2008 changes and the future of ISO. In addition, I sat in to listen to our very own Roz Moore co-present with Holly Duckworth on the use of the FMEA to make sure a company's Social Responsibility initiative goes well. I learned how to make a podcast and revisited the use of pivot tables. Other sessions I attended focused on quality tools and related topics.

Finally, I networked with our global community.

If you haven't been to a WCQI, you should attend one. They are very beneficial and give you a true sense of belonging to the ASQ global quality community.

CALL FOR PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS – 2009-2010 ASQ 1425 YEAR

Arranging for and setting up a program for the monthly meeting is a complicated and time consuming task. This year we have decided to rotate this function. This way one person is not overwhelmed each month with the planning of the meeting. We would also like to hear more from our members.

At this time we would like to extend an invitation to you, our members, to submit a topic that you would like to present at one of our monthly meetings. We usually hold our meetings from September to May with our December meeting being our Christmas dinner.

What say you? Do you have a topic you are passionate about and would like to present at one of our monthly meetings?

You may contact our Chair Officer via E-Mail as follows: Sylvia Garcés Soria, ASQ Section 1425 Chair, Soria07@aol.com, ASQ1425@aol.com

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas

American Society of Quality Section 1425 is located in the Lower Rio Grande valley of Texas. It encompasses Brownsville/Matamoros to McAllen/Reynosa and extends to students at Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM), Universidad de Monterrey (UEDEM, recently became a whole ASQ division by itself), both are at Monterrey Nuevo León, México.

Our section has regular monthly meetings; these are held at different places. Our meetings take place at different cities; hence allowing participation from members from other locations. For future dates and locations, please visit our web site at www.asq1425.org

Please, if you have questions, comments or recommendations for subjects to be included on our site and or Newsletter; please send them to these E-mail addresses:

For web updates to ASQ1425@yahoo.com and for Newsletter related information juliocesarsalinas@gmail.com

Variation

In simple yet profound terms, variation represents the difference between an ideal and an actual situation.

An ideal represents a standard of perfection—the highest standard of excellence[1]—that is uniquely defined by stakeholders, including direct customers, internal customers, suppliers, society and shareholders. Excellence is synonymous with quality, and excellent quality results from doing the right things, in the right way.

The fact that we can strive for an ideal but never achieve it means that stakeholders always experience some variation from the perfect situations they envision. This, however, also makes improvement and progress possible. Reducing the variation stakeholders experience is the key to quality and continuous improvement.

According to the law of variation as defined in the Statistical Quality Control Handbook:

- “Everything varies.” In other words, no two things are exactly alike.
- “Groups of things from a constant system of causes tend to be predictable.” We can’t predict the behavior or

characteristics of any one thing. Predictions only become possible for groups of things where patterns can be observed.[2]

If outcomes from systems can be predicted, then it follows that they can be anticipated and managed.

Managing Variation

In 1924, Dr. Walter Shewhart of Bell Telephone Laboratories developed the new paradigm for managing variation. As part of this paradigm, he identified two causes of variation:

- Common cause, or noise, variation is inherent in a process over time. It affects every outcome of the process and everyone working in the process. Managing common cause variation thus requires improvements to the process.
- Special cause, or signal, variation arises because of unusual circumstances and is not an inherent part of a process. Managing this kind of variation involves locating and removing the unusual or special cause. Shewhart further distinguished two types of mistakes that are possible in managing variation: treating a common cause as special and treating a special cause as common. Later, W. Edwards Deming estimated that a lack of an understanding

of variation resulted in situations where 95% of management actions result in no improvement.[3] Referred to as tampering, action taken to compensate for variation within the control limits of a stable system increases, rather than decreases, variation.

References

1. Matthew E. May presents this definition for perfection in *The Elegant Solution: Toyota's Formula for Mastering Innovation* (New York: Free Press, 35).
2. Western Electric Company, *Statistical Quality Control Handbook*, 2nd ed. (AT&T Technologies, 1984) p. 6-7.
3. W. Edwards Deming, *The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study, 1993) p.38.

Based on Timothy J. Clark, [*Success Through Quality: Support Guide for the Journey to Continuous Improvement*](#), ASQ Quality Press, 1999.