

Quality Matters

Northern Virginia Section 0511
American Society for Quality Control

MISCELLANEOUS

Bits and Pieces

A SQC section 0511 Mission Statement: Our mission is to provide information on quality sciences (the study of variation and techniques) primarily to dues-paying members, secondarily for outreach and growth for the purpose of human growth and professional development within our geographic charter boundaries.

ASQC Section 0511 Vision Statement: Our vision is to be the source for technical excellence in quality sciences, to be in touch with our members, community and their needs, and that our members be knowledgeable in the quality sciences.

ASQC has over 140,000 individual members,

over 1,100 sustaining members, 21 divisions, 250 sections, 4 technical committees, and over 72,000 certifications.

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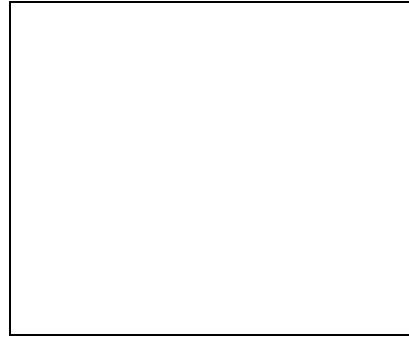
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Section 0511 Affairs: A Letter from the Chair

By H.J. Shaw, Chairperson

I would like to introduce myself to you - the backbone of Section 0511 - the Members. I assumed the position of Chairperson of the Northern Virginia Section 0511 on July 1, 1996. I have worked within the Section for over 6 years, holding positions as Newsletter Editor, Publicity Chair, and Chair-Elect. I, and my Executive Board Staff, are dedicated to you and the quality of the Section. The upcoming year holds many significant challenges for Section 0511. One of the biggest is the continued roll-out of the new Section Management Program (SMP). With the support of my Staff, the SMP will help our section in meeting its strategic objectives while coming into alignment with the Society's plan.



Another challenge is improving communications. The Executive Board holds monthly meetings to work as a team in identifying and discussing hot topics. The Section has provided easy communications among members and I encourage you to send messages to me or Section Board members on e-mail: asqc0511@quality.org. Our URL address is: <http://www.quality.org/qc> and our HOTLINE for section meeting and other affairs is: (703) 978-ASQC (2772). Please use each of these tools to become more familiar with your Section and to tell the Board what your needs and desires are.

Bill Eastham (Chair-Elect) and I plan to continue strengthening the relationship between members, other sections and organizations within the area (Section 0509 - Washington, DC; Section 0502 - Baltimore; Washington Deming Study Group; Capital Chapter AQP; IEEE, and the local communities).

Another strong suit the Section has is the American Society for Quality Control Certification Program. The certification program was developed more than 25 years ago to recognize those individuals who have demonstrated proficiency within a specified body of knowledge. The program has become a marketplace discriminator for quality

professionals and is consistently cited in ASQC member surveys as one of the most important activities of the Society. For many, the certification program is the foundation of ASQC. Seek out and find what certification you desire:

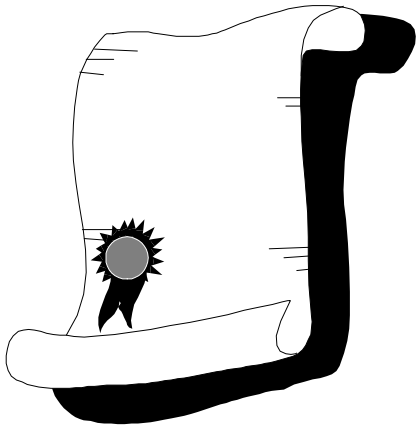
Certified Quality Auditor (CQA); Certified Quality Engineer (CQE); Certified Reliability Engineer (CRE); Certified Quality Technician (CQT); Certified Mechanical Inspector (CMI); Certified Quality Manager (CQM); and Certified Software Quality Engineer (CSQE).

Why become certified? In today's world, where quality competition is a fact of life and the need for a work force proficient in the principles and practices of quality implementation is a central concern of many companies, certification is a mark of excellence. It demonstrates that the certified individual has the knowledge to ensure quality of products and services. Over 125 companies have formally recognized ASQC certifications verification of an individual's possession of this knowledge. Certification is an investment in your career and in the competitiveness of your employer. Anyone interested in certification courses within Northern Virginia or Washington, DC areas, contact the Section Education Chair, David Kae at (703) 620-8071 or education@quality.org.

I look forward to working with both volunteers and my Staff to achieve the strategic objectives of the Section and Society. Communication and teamwork are the cornerstones that will allow us to have a very successful year. Let us hear from you!

Exam Schedule and Information

Upcoming exams include the following:



CRE/CQT/CMI/CQM/CSQE
Exam date: 10/19/96
Application deadline: 10/11/96

CQA/CQE
Exam date: 12/07/96
Application deadline: 10/11/96

CRE/CQT/CMI/CQM/CSQE
Exam date: 3/01/97
Application deadline: 1/10/97

CQA/CQE
Exam date: 6/07/97
Application deadline: 4/04/97

CRE/CQT/CMI/CQM/CSQE
Exam date: 10/18/97
Application deadline: 8/22/97

CQA/CQE
Exam date: 12/06/97
Application deadline: 10/10/97

Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar!

The planned start date for the section 0511 Certification Refresher courses for the CQE and CQA is September 18, 1996 with a minimum registration of 8 students for either class. More information and registration forms can be requested from Don Hendrix at (202)-488-5430.

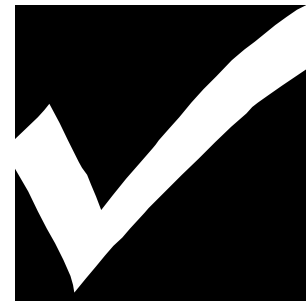
Section 0511 Contact Information Book - Coming Soon

We're going to be putting together a pocketbook of Section members' contact information. It will NOT include addresses, but will include the following pieces of information:

1. Member Name
2. "Member Since 19xx"
2. Member number
3. Member certification(s)
4. Member company & location
5. Member Work (or Contact) Number (as listed in ASQC member database)
6. Member Email Address, if available

If you do NOT want any of the above information listed for YOU --or want some other phone number (perhaps, your pager number) listed for YOU, please contact the E-Media Chair, Bill Casti, NO LATER THAN 10 October 96. Be sure to include your name, membership number and the information you WANT included with your listing, if different from that listed with ASQC National, especially your email address. NO additional information than those listed pieces above will be provided. **THERE IS NO NEED TO RESPOND IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO CHANGE ANY OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION!**

We will be distributing the booklets at cost, in both printed format and on disk. Order forms will be distributed soon.



Remember: if Bill doesn't hear from you by close of business on 10 October 96, we will proceed to list the specified information for you, as it is filed with your membership data with ASQC National.

Bill can be reached by:
Fax: (703) 834-8209
Email: media@quality.org
US Mail: PO Box 1412
Herndon, VA 20172-1412

Thank you for your quick response!

Book Reviews

Human Resources and Management Perspectives on TQM: Concepts and Practices, by Stephen B. Knouse, editor. Few books explain the importance of the behavioral side of TQM, particularly human resources management--this book does. It presents current ideas and research in the areas of human resource management that are particularly important for your TQM efforts to succeed. Written by industry and academic experts, applications include public and private sectors, TQM in relation to emerging international issues, diversity in human resource management, and current concepts of human resources and TQM.

1996. 324 pages. ISBN 0-87389-346-8. 6 x 9 hardcover. Item H0899 ASQC Member Price \$36.00

Understanding and Applying Value - Added Assessment: Eliminating Business Process Waste, by William E. Trischler. Designed to help process improvement practitioners find and eliminate nonvalue added steps in business processes, this book will lead to significant savings in time and money. Use the value-added assessment process to determine which activities are necessary and which are nonvalue-added. Featured is a valuable section that shoes a detailed method for calculating the time and cost associated with a process. It also contains a special dictionary of verbs that often -emerge as nonvalue-added actions. Directions for using this dictionary, along with definitions, examples, the rationale for their classification as nonvalue-added actions, and synonyms are included.

1996. 127 pages. ISBN 0-87389-369-7. 8 1/2 x 11 softcover. Item H0934. ASQC Member Price \$24.00



The Best on Quality, Volume 7, International Academy for Quality, John D. Hromi, editor. *The Best on Quality* series was inaugurated in 1988 by the members of the International Academy for Quality. This seventh volume contains three sections featuring 26 award-winning papers. Over two dozen international quality leaders have contributed to this volume, which

addresses quality-related matters in the United States and Japan. Papers dealing with auditing, management, training, software, and technology are among the valuable features included in this volume.

1996. 590 pages. ISBN 0-87389-368-9. 6 x 9 hardcover. Item H0933. ASQC Member Price \$67.00

Big Three Task Force and ASQC Release QS-9000 Database (from Quality Digest, July 1996)

The big three automakers recently signed an agreement with the American Society for Quality Control to produce and oversee a QS-9000 database of certified suppliers.

The *QS-9000 Worldwide Database Directory* captures and tracks information on QS-9000-certified companies worldwide, including their names, mailing and Web-site addresses, QS-9000 scope statements and current registrars' names and issuing locations. The information also includes companies' certificate numbers, their certificate's issue and expiration dates, the accreditation bodies shown on the certificate, and the SIC and NACE codes covered. The database also contains a current list of QS-9000 accreditation bodies and qualified registrars.

The first issue of *QS-9000 Worldwide Database Directory* came out May 1 and is available on disk, via the Internet or in printed form. The database is updated monthly, except for the printed version, which will be updated quarterly beginning July 1.

The domestic price for non-ASQC members is \$169 for the printed edition, \$149 for diskette and

\$109 for Internet access (subscribers receive access passwords). ASQC members pay \$10 less. *For more information contact ASQC at (800) 248-1946.*

Monthly Dinner Meetings

Section 0511 has monthly dinner meetings with guest speakers at the Silver Plate Restaurant in Fairfax. Our next meeting is September 18th featuring Scott Reuther, Director of Software Productivity Consortium. The topic will be "The Capability Maturity Model Process... Where is it and Where is it going?" The cost for the dinner is \$20.00 per person. To make reservations, please call Inchcape Testing Services, Intertek at (703) 591-1320 Ext. 0.



The speakers vary month to month so please call the ASQC Section 0511 **Information Line at 703/ 978-ASQC** or 703/ 978-2772. And remember, you do not have to come to the dinner to hear the speaker!

To Hell and Back
by Oren Harari

Learn to Discriminate between customers from hell and customers who have gone through hell. The distinction is crucial.

Yes, Virginia, there are customers from hell. To those who insist that there is no such animal, I say: hello, hello-earth calling. Kris Anderson of Performance Research Associates hit the bull's eye when she said: "If you don't believe that there is such a thing as a customer from hell, you must be a consultant or a CEO. No one who works with the public on a regular basis can doubt their existence."

Starry-eyed souls who spout the line that "the customer is always right" are usually well-buffered from the bizzaros of the world that the poor front-line folks periodically have to deal with.

Oh, yes, I know we're supposed to love all customers, but pray tell, how does one love a customer like Gerard Finneran? I read about Gerard in several publications, but I like *Esquire's* magazine's account the best:

"Gerard Finneran, a 58-year-old investment-bank president from New York, was arrested for allegedly assaulting a flight attendant and defecating on a service cart while drunk on a flight from Buenos Aires to New York. According to the complaint, Finneran used 'linen napkins as toilet paper and wiped his hands on various service implements used by the crew' and then 'and then 'tracked feces throughout the aircraft.'"

Or how about this one? A few years ago, I received a call late at night from the COO of a hospital I was working with at the time. He was perplexed. The hospital was moving aggressively toward a patient-oriented, patient-friendly culture. But a little problem had

unexpectedly emerged. A gypsy had been admitted to the hospital, and his clan had taken over the hospital lobby. By "taken over," I mean they were literally camping in the lobby, intimidating other customers, ignoring the hospital's halfhearted requests to cease and desist, and stealing anything not bolted to the floors. The COO asked me hesitatingly: "Well, given our new culture, what am I supposed to do with these people?"

Might we agree that both the above cases are indeed customers from hell? If so, the COO's question is germane. How do we handle them?

I don't think love is the answer. Assuming the first case is true (and I did unofficially verify it with airline personnel), I know what I'd do if I were management. I'd manacle the son-of-a-gun on the flight, then I'd see to it that he was arrested immediately upon touchdown. Then I'd prosecute the dickens out of him. Case closed.

In the second case, here's what I did say to the beleaguered COO: "Are you out of your mind? Is your hospital trying to corner the thieves-and-rogues niche? If not, call in security and get 'em the hell out of your hospital immediately!" He agreed, with relief, and he acted. Case closed.

There is no excuse for tolerating individuals who are ugly, abusive, destructive or potentially violent with your staff. Customers from hell exist, and they must be dealt with firmly, fairly, quickly and unapologetically. Any other response is an insult to your employees and a double insult to the vast majority of customers who are decent human beings.

But, but, but-and here is where the crux of this month's column veers-the issues are often gray and ambiguous. Businesses often

automatically label customers who complain as customers from hell, which is about as stupid as a business decision as one can imagine. As I've often written in this space, complaining customers are worth their weight in gold. They verbalize what it will take to keep their business, they articulate what more silent but dissatisfied customers are experiencing, and finally, they point out the flaws in your systems, your operations and your corporate culture that are draining your capital and your earnings.

My colleagues Chip Bell and Ron Zemke, both of Performance Research Associates, bring up another important point. There's a critical difference between a customer from hell and a customer who's been through hell. But they often look alike. Bell contends that since the number of customers that are truly malicious or evil is extremely rare, it's far better to first assume they've been through hell. And if they really have been through hell, then you had better believe that other customers are going through hell, and you're going to wind up losing everyone's business. I would take it a step further: Each time you respond inappropriately to customers who have gone through hell, you push them closer

to the door marked "customer from hell."

Bell, the author of *Customers As Partners* (Berrett-Koehler, 1994), agrees wholeheartedly that a true customer from hell ought to be fired pronto, but a customer that has gone through hell is potentially one of your most value-adding partners-if you (the individual and the company) really and truly listen to his or her concerns, and then respond appropriately, sincerely and dramatically.

This brings us to the latest tale of the weird. Last year Jeremy Dorosin of Walnut Creek, Calif., joined the swelling ranks of customers enduring crummy experiences. (I use the term swelling ranks not merely from anecdotal impressions, but from hard empirical data from nationwide research efforts like the recent American Customer Satisfaction Index study. The ACSI results indicated that, overall, customer satisfaction is heading south in the United States as companies lip service to customer service notwithstanding-are slashing even modest investments in this direction and seem incapable of comprehending that customers' expectations of service are going up, not down.)



But I digress. Jeremy Dorosin says he purchased two defective espresso machines from a Starbucks Coffee outlet in the San

Francisco Bay Area, and he was unhappy with the allegedly bureaucratic, impersonal way Starbucks handled his complaints.

Apparently, he was very unhappy. Most customers in his shoes would have either griped or silently seethed. Not Dorosin. What he did was the stuff of nightmares for any executive. He invested \$10,000 for three prominent ads in the *Wall Street Journal*. Here is what one of them said:

"HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH STARBUCKS COFFEE? Over 2,000 calls say you're not alone. 1-800-510-3483. Selected appropriate incoming letters of public opinion about this customer service problem with Starbucks will be published in an upcoming ad in this newspaper. Thanks for your tremendous support. - J. Dorosin, One Mistreated Customer"

Mistreated Starbucks Customers
2631 N. Mainstreet
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

The ad obviously touched a nerve, because the nationwide response was voluminous. Supportive phone calls and letters poured in from all over the country. Talk shows and pop magazines jumped on the story. So did the serious press: I was asked to comment on this new international crisis by *CBS Nightly News*. Chip Bell spoke on National Public Radio; and Ron Zemke was interviewed by the *Wall Street Journal* itself. Depending on which side of the fence you stood, Dorosin was either a saintly hero standing up for the abused common man, or a deranged devil willing to destroy a shining icon of corporate capitalism for his own egotism. I don't believe either conclusion is accurate. In fact, I'm not interested in pursuing whether Dorosin was right or wrong; that's

why I didn't call him for an interview even though he lives a stone's throw from me. My point is that the Dorosin-Starbucks case represents the murky, uncertain terrain that companies must confront, the ambiguous no-man's land-between the customer from hell and the customer who's been through hell. The more relevant question is this: Regardless of where Dorosin stood on this continuum, how should Starbucks have dealt with the situation?

Bell and I have put our heads together to suggest a few vital steps that Starbucks should have taken, but didn't. Hopefully, these steps will help your organization cope with customer complaints more effectively-capitalize on them, in fact.

1. BE EMPATHETIC. The first and most important thing Starbucks should have done is to demonstrate humility, empathy and understanding as a way of telling Dorosin: "Your feelings are valid." Starbucks contends that its personnel acted "properly," that they followed "acceptable" procedures for handling complaints. Maybe so, but that's not the point.

Complaining customers are often further alienated by what they perceive as legally "correct," but nevertheless unempathetic, insensitive, by-the-book, bureaucratic responses they receive when they are angry or distressed. When Dorosin complained, Starbucks people didn't have to agree with his version of the facts. But they didn't have to hide behind "cover-thy-rear" procedures, either. Given the fact that he was a regular customer, and given the minuscule dollar value of the machines he purchased (a couple hundred bucks) relative to that one store's daily sales, they could have said and done things to let

him know that they were genuinely sorry for the trouble he experienced, and genuinely interested in solving the problem to his satisfaction, corporate policies and procedures be damned.

Companies that “get it” understand that this mind-set yields an enormous return on investment. Federal Express invests megabucks in teaching its front line people on how to defuse angry customers over the phone or face to face. Carl Swell, owner of the fabulously successful Dallas-based car dealership and author of *Customers for Life* (Doubleday, 1990), says: Why argue with a customer over a \$25 item on the bill when you know that if you keep him as a loyal returnee, he’ll spend between \$300,000 and \$400,000 with you over a lifetime, and tell his friends to boot?

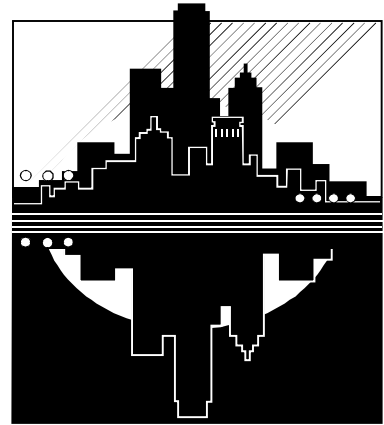
Ironically, Starbucks’ cheery motto was, “Just say ‘yes’” to which Dorosin replied: “What a joke!” In fact, in one TV interview, Dorosin said his anger with Starbucks was less with the fact the espresso machines were defective, than with the fact that once he brought his concerns to their attention, “they made me feel unimportant... I was a loyal customer [but] they weren’t interested in anything I had to say.”

Who was right, Dorosin or Starbucks? Who cares? This isn’t a math problem; it’s a business problem. Should Starbucks have simply replaced the machines? With the right dose of empathy, I’m not even sure that would have been necessary, though places like Nordstrom or L.L. Bean would have done so, no questions asked; more important, they wouldn’t have done it grudgingly, but with true apology. That’s the validation that customers seek, especially when there’s a screw

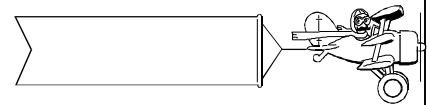
up. Customers will tolerate even the most intense foul-ups as long as they believe that the company really cares about their feelings. And as any lawyer will tell you, the big-time law suits come when people feel they’ve been ignored or bureaucratically jerked around by impersonal, uncaring organizations.

2. TAKE ACTION. Once the problem escalated, that is once it moved from the Bay Area store to a nationwide *Wall Street Journal* ad, Starbucks executives in Seattle should have leaped into dramatic action aimed at proactive recovery. Ron Zemke, co-author of *Knock Your Socks Off Answers* (AMA_COM), has suggested that Starbucks could have hired a blimp to drag a big apology banner around Dorosin’s home and place of employment. That’s plenty dramatic, to be sure, and has much more to commend it than the official stonewalling that Starbucks actually did.

Dorosin’s reaction to Starbucks’ bureaucratized was, shall we say, extreme. His new demands included a top-of-the-line Starbucks espresso machine (\$2,495), a two-page apology ad in the *Wall Street Journal* (\$247,182), and a public pledge that Starbucks open a center for runaway youth in San Francisco (\$???). Clearly unacceptable, but dramatic-recovery response by Starbucks from the very beginning might have precluded this degeneration of events.



If you really want to talk dramatic, here’s what Starbucks executives could have done the moment they saw Dorosin’s first ad: One, muzzle their in-house legal and public relations attack dogs from focusing on official denial and blame-the-victim scapegoating. Two, have two or three senior people (why not the president?) fly down to meet Dorosin personally; let’s face it, anyone who is willing to spend that much on ads must have something to say. By meeting him and listening, listening, listening, the whole situation could have been defused quickly. Even more important, executives who’ve become removed from daily customer interfaces might have learned something very, very valuable about their customers, service, products, and operations.



In fact, assuming that Dorosin did say something valuable, why not fly him to corporate headquarters and let him tell his story to corporate personnel who’ve been so busy fueling the rapid growth of Starbucks that they may have forgotten who brought them to the dance? In fact again, why not

invite Dorosin to join a task force aimed at revamping procedures and training that apply to store personnel who might regularly deal with customer dissatisfaction?

In short, instead of considering the guy a simple nut case, why not assume that he's mad as hell about something, and that he's doing what a lot of other customers only fantasize about doing? And then why not include him, involve him? By doing so, Starbucks would have retained his loyalty (remember the TARP research that has found that complaining customers whose problems are properly addressed spend twice as much as those who have a problem but don't complain). Just as important, Starbucks would have taken his creative, manic energy and funneled it into a constructive, consultative role to help figure out ways to solve these problems so that nobody else experiences them. (By the way, if you ever hear anyone say, "Hey, I can't be kissing up to every customer who takes out a \$10,000 ad in the *Wall Street Journal*," point out to them how ridiculous they sound.)

3. FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP. After No. 2 above, Starbucks could have sent Dorosin a certificate of thanks, and cash payment or freebie coupons as compensation for his efforts. Executives could have checked in with Dorosin a few months hence to ensure that his subsequent experiences with Starbucks were not merely "satisfactory," but "outstanding." They could have publicized this incident internally as a terrific tool for training, store operations and corporate policy-making—all aimed at dramatically boosting customer service in generally coping with unhappy customers in a way that enhances their loyalty, and developing a few contingency

"planned recovery" systems when things do break down. They could have publicized this entire incident externally so as to let the public know that we (Starbucks) care about our customers, we want to partner with them, and we've got enough humility to admit when we might have wronged them.

Finally, executives could have done some reflecting on the possibility that an obsession on corporate growth might be overshadowing attention to the kinds of customer experiences that are "soul" of what Starbucks began with.

Ron Zembke has written some wise words that apply to this situation: "Too often we worry about the cost of atonement and the repercussive consequences of paying for a customer's ire and displeasure. But...the cost of trepidation is most certainly higher than the cost of consolation."

So, to reiterate the theme that we began with: yes, indeed, there are customers from hell, and they'll come at you with provocation. Dump them politely but fast. Prosecute them if they go over the edge. Don't ever expect your front-line people to tolerate their abuses.

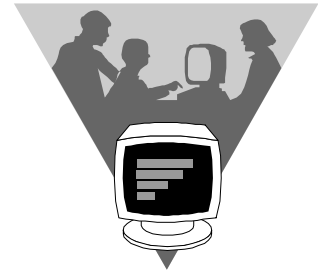
But remember, customers from hell are the rare exception to the rule. Before you label every angry, complaining customer a villain, think about your dependence on these people, think about how easy it would be to placate them with empathetic, constructive, inclusionary responses, and think about what a pain in the neck we all are when we act the role of customer in our personal lives.

Web Watch

American Society for Quality Control

Address: (<http://www.asqc.org>)

Description: ASQC is the leading quality improvement organization in the United States, with more than 130,000 individual and 1,000 sustaining members worldwide.



Headquartered in Milwaukee, ASQC carries out a variety of professional, educational, and informational programs.

Site features include organizational structure, products and services, strategic plan, annual report, 1995 ASQC State of the Society update, history, and speeches.

ISO 9000: When Your Product Is People

(from ASQC News Bureau)

Documenting for ISO 9000 is difficult enough when your product is an easily definable product or service. But what about when your product is employees? Recently, the procedures used by 294 Adia Personnel Services branches to select and place temporary employees were registered to ISO 9002.



Unlike documenting products that can be tracked easily, Adia faced documenting products that can be much more difficult to account for-people.

Wanting to establish consistent quality among its branches, Adia's corporate staff compiled a quality management system manual outlining every procedure involved in placing clerical and light-industrial workers at local companies. Each branch reviewed job orders to ensure there were detailed notes on all transactions with current and prospective employees. Employees of Adia's branch offices also had to have confirmed references on file, completed application forms and results from tests identical to those given to other individuals applying for the same positions.

The process resulted in more consistent employee/client matching, says Liz Vaughn, quality manager at Adia Personnel Services.

"Our staff doesn't have to think twice about what has to be done," explains Vaughn. Instead, they can focus on working more closely with employees and companies to ensure a better fit between the two.

COMMENTARY SECTION

Opinions are like birthdays. Everybody has one. So, in this area of our newsletter, we invite rational, reasonable, and responsible opinions. As in any professional society, we find strong opinions. That's good; because if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. Naturally, some of us want to share our deepest, personal convictions. That's good; but be aware that when you stand for

something, you might be stepping on someone's toes. Thus, in our dialectical exercise, in our search for truth, we expect some friction.



Regardless, as long as we generate more light than heat, we'll be exercising the traditional function of professional societies--human growth and professional development. Please submit your commentary to the newsletter editor. Thanks.

Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reason by Henry Kling

What do we learn from the recent crash of Value-Jet into the Florida Everglades?

It reminds me of the error in trying to fix a common-cause problem with a special-cause remedy.

You know, jumping on the most recent error and then taking corrective action without regard to the history of previous errors. Nelson's Funnel Experiment demonstrates the folly in such rash action. Management makes this error more than 80% of the time.



Typically, every air accident has been treated as special-cause variation (like on control charts). In other words, investigators look for who (rather than what) screwed up. Typically, investigators examine the pilot, the mechanic, the cargo loader, the air controller, etc. Typically, investigators have ignored the system that workers and managers have to cope with.

That's the way this recent investigation began. Fortunately, the right people must have been doing some statistical thinking. They must have been taking a fresh look at the data (going back many years) and considering systemic causes (common-cause variation). Deming's Red Beads Experiment illustrates this phenomenon.

In this case, the system contains a conflict between two traditional FAA roles -- safety and airline promotion. Too often, when FAA Safety Inspectors reported violations, the FAA promoters worked to mitigate harsh, corrective action. Fortunately, the right people are working on the system -- treating each accident as common-cause variation. That's doing the right thing for the right reason -- applying a common-cause remedy to a common-cause situation.

Dr. Deming would be amazed. He would say, "How could they know? Without profound knowledge, how could they know?"

We hope every had a great summer!

