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Quality Corner: How Quality Systems Can Bolster Your Business Strategy & Become a Competitive Advantage



Author: Eliana Pouchard, CBA

One would think that success is a direct result of a phenomenal strategy. One would think that success is a direct result of arduous work looking for ways to differentiate yourself from the competition and establish the so desired competitive advantage. In my opinion, that's half the truth. People, the right people, are the key ingredient in the perfect recipe for success. The right people will drive the strategy in the right direction, should it ever lose sight of true north. And with the right people comes the right culture, a culture that celebrates the value of the quality-minded, a culture that inextricably integrates the notion of Quality Systems.

But what are Quality Systems and how can they help?

Simply put, quality systems are the building blocks that define a culture based on the idea of continuous improvement. In the competitive landscape we now face, continuous positive change is the life-jacket that will save us from drowning in an ocean of fierce predatory competition. The concept of continuous improvement does not only apply to the provision of products

and services. This concept applies to how you approach training for your employees, what standards you set for your suppliers, what type of relationships you forge with your customers, among many others. It should be the nectar that nurtures your day to day operations and decision making at all levels.

Performance monitoring, supported by adequate tracking and trending, is the fuel that keeps the idea of continuous improvement alive. Tracking and trending to unveil key messages is paramount in painting the picture of where we stand. Well informed, we're better poised to take any necessary actions, whether it is to prevent recurrence of problems, to prevent occurrence of potentially adverse events, or to reinforce what has resulted in positive outcomes. For instance, it may be part of your business strategy to provide top notch service. Tracking and trending the effectiveness of your training programs will allow you to realize whether your employees have the required training to provide the best service in the industry. It may also identify areas where additional resources are needed to launch better training programs.

Negative feedback from customers can be a blessing in disguise and should also be tracked and trended. If properly handled, customer complaints can open up opportunities for improvement. Tracking and trending of negative customer experiences will unveil messages that have the potential to result in innovative product and process changes. Receiving that negative feedback from customers is a much better situation than remaining oblivious to deleterious issues and ultimately losing valued customers.

Issues will arise, processes will fail at some point or another, but having the right culture that drives you to address issues and to learn from past experiences is what will raise you to the top. This culture will equip you well to face adversity when it shows at your doorstep. Your customers will notice your approach and that might just be the competitive advantage that influences your customer's next purchasing decision.

Interested in submitting your article for next month's Quality Corner? Below are some helpful guidelines for Quality Corner submissions:

1. Email submissions to communication@asqtoronto.org by the 15th of the month.
2. Maximum 500 words.
3. A small image (4 cm x 6 cm) can be included.
4. Submission of an article will not guarantee publishing in a given month's newsletter and may be published in a subsequent newsletter.
5. If your submission is selected, the Newsletter Editor will contact you directly.
6. Your submission will be reviewed for clarity, readability, grammar, spelling, etc. and may require revisions prior to publishing in the newsletter.

If you have any questions, please contact the Communications Chair at communication@asqtoronto.org or speak with Sanaz Ghazi at the next section meeting.

Did You Know?

On Wednesday Oct. 11, 2017, Scott Wright, Cyber Security Coach and Consultant is going to share his thought with us on Call of Duty: Managing Corporate Cyber Security Risks in a Connected World.

Registration will be open soon at:
<http://asqtorontooct11.eventbrite.com>

The event will be held at SANDMAN SIGNATURE
MISSISSAUGA
HOTEL
5400 Dixie Road | Mississauga ON |
L4W 4T4

Member of the Month



We want to hear from you, our members and recognize those of you doing great work in the Quality community. We would like to help promote our valued and trusted members so that each of us can get to know one another a little better while recognizing the expertise that is part of our community. We will be featuring a section in the monthly newsletter for someone that made a great contribution to the quality world. If you are interested in being featured, please visit <https://goo.gl/forms/9Cewa17TZwaUDZIS2> and submit the required information by the deadline.

Testimonials



ASQ Toronto is looking for members to participate in a quick 2 minute testimonial that we will use to promote the ASQ Toronto community via our new [ASQ Toronto YouTube channel](#). Video recordings will take place at the end of the monthly ASQ section meeting or remotely. To participate, go to <https://goo.gl/forms/27ZMDg4llp3VLbn2>. You will need to answer the following in the 2 min video testimonial:

1. What is your name, job title, and how long have you been a member of ASQ?
2. What is 1 thing you learned from the section meeting?
3. What do you enjoy the most as an ASQ Toronto member?

September Section Meeting

This month's section meeting took place on September 13, 2017 at the SpringHill Suites in Vaughan. The guest speaker was Sarah Thompson who spoke to ASQ Toronto members about **Strengthening continuous quality improvement in Ontario's public health units.**

About the Speaker: Sarah Thompson

Sarah Thompson is the Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist for the Infectious Diseases Control Division of York Region Public Health. Sarah has spent her career as a quality professional, with the last 3 years in Public Health. Prior to Public Health, she worked in long term care, telecommunications, automotive supply and manufacturing for over 15 years. She has a Bachelor of Science in Statistics, a Lean Green Belt, three certifications from American Society for Quality: Manager of Quality & Organizational Excellence, Quality Auditor and Quality Engineer, and is a Project Management Professional (PMP).

Annette Sonneveld is the Performance Management Supervisor at Toronto Public Health. She supervises a team of Quality Improvement Specialists and Program Evaluators. She holds a certificate in Lean Six Sigma from the University of Toronto, School of Continuing Education and has her Certified Excellence Professional designation from Excellence Canada. Annette's public health career spans over 30 years at 5 different health units.

Topic: Strengthening CQI in Ontario Public Health Units

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) has been discussed in Ontario public health units for over a decade. CQI's importance as a part of performance management was recognized in 2006 by the Capacity Review Committee and was included as a required activity for public health units. Individual public health units have developed innovative ways to do this work based on specific organizational structure, staffing and understanding of CQI. This means that CQI in public health units looks different across the province making it difficult to share information, learn from each other and develop common standards of practice.

The goal of this locally driven collaborative project (LDPC) was to bring Ontario's public health units together to describe what CQI means for them, and how they can move forward together in a clear, consistent way by:

1. Identifying the drivers and attributes of CQI that are applicable and transferable to Ontario's public health sector.
2. Describing the current state of CQI in and across Ontario's public health units.

The project research question was:
How can systematic continuous quality improvement be strengthened within Ontario's Public Health Units?



Presenters:

- Sarah Thompson, York Region Public Health
- Annette Sonneveld, Toronto Public Health

Five main domains and several supporting enablers for implementing CQI that could be considered in the public health setting were revealed in the scoping review. Research reviewed from the public health sector demonstrated similarities in the domains and enablers when examined together with research from the other health sectors. The major difference is the focus on Quality Improvement (QI) practices framed within the preventive and health promotion nature of a majority of public health work.

The five main domains and supporting enablers include:

1. Innovative, non-punitive culture where CQI is aligned to the overall organizational vision.
2. Organizational supports such as: QI training; hiring and performance review practices that are aligned to the CQI principles; ensuring appropriate internal funding and resources to support QI work; and a focus on the implementation of multidisciplinary teams.
3. Leadership for QI is necessary at all levels of the organization from senior leadership, middle management, QI facilitators, front line leaders, all of whom have varied responsibilities.
4. Leveraging existing data and related systems, and ensuring that data is robust and credible and available in real time.
5. External supports for enabling QI were quality improvement collaboratives, accreditation / certification and external funding and resources.

September Section Meeting



In Ontario, there are 36 public health units; of these 34 participated our QI Maturity Tool survey. From these 34 health units, 3,503 staff completed the survey, resulting in a provincial response rate of 46.6%. The average score for all participants from Ontario public health units was 4.94.

This places the provincial average in the “Emerging” stage of QI maturity. The survey results suggest that participants place a high value on QI (6.00), but collectively are at less “mature” stages of QI in relation to QI organizational culture (5.09) and the competency and capacity to engage in QI activities (4.58). A review of individual public health unit scores indicates that public health units across Ontario are at varying stages of QI maturity. Of the 34 public health units who participated 32% (N=11) scored in the progressing stage; 30% (N=10) scored in the emerging stage and 38% (N=13) scored in the beginning stage. No health unit had an average score that would rank them within the achieving or excelling level of QI Maturity.

This study has identified enablers of the CQI management framework in five domains that together support the implementation of QI in health-related organizations and may be applicable in the public health setting in Ontario.

Our goal is to advance CQI within and across Ontario’s health units with evidence-based applied research grounded in the experience and perspectives of those working in the field of public health.

The results of this survey will enhance public health professionals understanding of the current state of the implementation of QI in Ontario. Results will also be used by the CQI LDCP team to develop the next research proposal to identify and/or enhance specific tools, systems and structures that support CQI across and within Ontario public health units.



Fast Fact

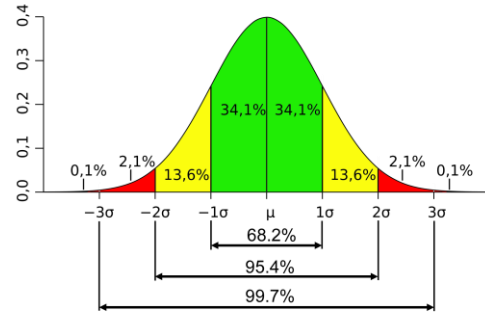
The ASQ Toronto section is the 3rd largest section membership of ASQ globally with over 1,344 members.

The largest member section is Minnesota with a whopping 1,621 members.

What would it take for ASQ Toronto to be even bigger and better next month? Next Year? Speak to a member of the ASQ Toronto executive team at the next section meeting or contact them by [email!!!](#)

ASQ Statistics Webinars

The ASQ Statistics division has several free webinars available for its members to learn more about risk based statistics for product testing, process capability analysis, DOE, and paired t-tests. To watch any of the webinars visit <https://www.youtube.com/ASQStatsDivision> today.



Volunteers Needed: Photographers

All photographers on deck! We're currently looking for ASQ members in good standing with strong photography skills to take quality photos in one or more of ASQ Toronto's special events such as the Employment Assistance meeting in March, Spring Seminar in April, and Awards & Recognition meeting in December. Volunteers will receive 0.3 RU per meeting per session as applicable. It would be ideal if you could bring your own DSLR camera for these events.

If you are interested, please submit a brief resume or share your LinkedIn profile with Savita Deshpande, Volunteer Chair at volunteers@asqtoronto.org.



Change in Exam Format

ASQ has moved from the traditional "pencil and paper" exam format to computer-based testing (CBT). Detailed information is available on ASQ's website at <http://asq.org/cbt/>. Since this exam format is still new, please visit the website from time to time as ASQ provides new updates.



Job Postings

| Job Title | Company | Expiry Date |
|-----------|---------|-------------|
| | | |

There are no new job postings for September. Stay tuned!



ASQ Toronto Leadership Team

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|----------------------|--------------------|--|
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Feedback

Please let us know your opinion about the newsletters. What would you like to see in the newsletter and how we can make it better? Your ideas are most welcome.

Please email your comments to the Communications team at communication@asqtoronto.org.