

Join the ASQ
Section 1216
Group on
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<http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=2451778>

Quotes

The person who makes a success of living is the one who see his goal steadily and aims for it unswervingly. That is dedication.

– Cecil B. DeMille

A discovery is said to be an accident meeting a prepared mind.

– Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.

– Henry David Thoreau

Quality Link of the Month

<http://asq.org/manufacturing/why-quality/case-studies.html>



January Meeting: Tour PlastiCert Inc.

When: Tuesday, January 24th at 5:30 PM

Where: 300 Wilson Street North

Lewiston, MN 55952 (see attached map)

Please join us as Craig Porter and his team host us for a tour of the PlastiCert injection molding facility, located in Lewiston, MN, with dinner following at Golden Harvest in Utica, MN. PlastiCert focuses on partnering with their customers to provide superior service through the concept, part design input, material selection assistance, mold design, and production phases of the molded part lifecycle. They specialize in providing insight on how part design effects mold cost, production cost and manufacturability. Their efforts provide their business partners returns through faster time to market and lower overall product life cycle costs. PlastiCert prides itself on being a complete partner and welcomes low to medium size volumes, recognizing that not all customers have some or all high volume running product lines.

The company's capabilities include:

- Mold design, build and maintenance is all in-house
- Insert-molding
- Over-molding
- UL registered
- ISO 9001:2008 certified
- Manufacture products for use in the medical device and automotive industries
- Ability to set up a part-by-part profile in their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system creating a seamless environment for material requirement, production planning, shipping and finance - both real time and "what if?"
- Part decorating - both in mold and secondary operations.
- Value added assembly steps and processes

PlastiCert has molding presses ranging from 30 to 440 tons. PlastiCert has the mold design capability and tool shop necessary to meet up front Product Design requirements. PlastiCert has the ability to run production manually, automatically and with robots. Other capabilities include rotary presses, insert molding, two shot molding, value added assembly, ultrasonic welding and heat staking, custom decorating and packaging.

Additional information is available on the web -

<http://www.plasticert.com> or <http://www.linkedin.com/company/plasticert-inc>

PLEASE USE THE ATTACHED MAP TO FIND PLASTICERT. GPS AND ONLINE MAP SERVICES WILL NOT SHOW THE CORRECT LOCATION.

Dinner will be at Golden Harvest Cafe and Bar, 135 Highway 14 West, Utica, MN (map attached). The cost is \$15.00 for ASQ Members and guests, and \$8.00 for Students with ID. *There will be a brief section board meeting after dinner.* Please RSVP by replying to the Evite, or contact Alan Spalding at alan.spalding@bench.com

Pay for this meeting and other events with **PayPal**[™]
on the section website: <http://asq1216.homestead.com/SectMtg.html>

CERTIFICATION LINKS

ASQ Certification Exam Dates: <http://www.asq.org/certification/dates.html>
Recertification Information: <http://www.asq.org/certification/recertification/index.html>

FREE - ASQ Member Gift for January: Six Sigma Project Management Bundle

To start off the new year, ASQ's monthly member gift focuses on Six Sigma Project Management. There is little material available on the process of making Six Sigma projects an integral part of the bottom line of a company, and often this is a weak point in many fledgling improvement programs. Get a variety of these rare tools and resources including:

- ☆ Project Portfolio Selection for Six Sigma e-Book
- ☆ Lean Six Sigma Project Prioritization Matrix
- ☆ Project Ticket Template
- ☆ Project Charter Template
- ☆ Bonus Webcasts: Seven Lean Six Sigma Tools Webcast Series

We hope that you enjoy our gesture of gratitude for your membership. Thank you for your commitment to quality and for continuing to raise the voice of quality.

This benefit will be available to ASQ members through January 31, 2012 at <http://asq.org/member-gift/> .

ASQ Certification Exam Deadline - January 13

The deadline to apply for the March certification exams is just days away. Apply before time runs out!

Upcoming Exam Date: March 3, 2012
Application Deadline: January 13, 2012

For more information, visit

http://asq.org/promotional/cert-prep.html?WT.dcsvid=MjM3MTQyNTAxMQS2&WT.mc_id=EM117947

Wanted: Course Content and Peer Reviewers for ASQ Certification Exams

Volunteers are needed to help develop preparation courses for the Certified Quality Technician (CQT) and Certified HACCP Auditor (CHA) exams. Contributors will help quality practitioners around the world make our world work better. Interested ASQ members should be CQT, CQI, CCT, or CHA certified and must not have written for an actual ASQ exam within the past two years. If you'd like to help, please contact Kate Berumen (kberumen@asq.org).

Benefits of Becoming a MN Quality Award Evaluator

Participating on the Board of Evaluators contributes to the improvement and competitiveness of Minnesota businesses and organizations. The Minnesota Council for Quality depends entirely upon a volunteer Board of Evaluators and Panel of Judges to evaluate applicant organizations and to recommend Minnesota Quality Award levels.



The Board of Evaluators consists of approximately 125-150 members, including 13-15 Judges and 20-25 Team Leaders. We seek a diverse Board of Evaluators, representing all sectors of our economy (manufacturing, service, non-profit, healthcare, education, and government), all organizational functions (human resources, finance, accounting, operations, quality, marketing, IT, etc.), and all levels of leadership. Most Evaluator candidates have expertise that would be useful for our program.

For those who haven't been an evaluator in the past, the next deadline for applying to join the evaluator team is January 27. Returning evaluator applications are due on February 10. For more information, please visit http://www.councilforquality.org/assess_eval_schedule.cfm.

The QC Group - Course Offerings

To see a list of quality-related courses please visit <http://www.theQCgroup.com/training>.

The Butterfly Effect: Managing Your Organization as a System

Because most things in life are part of larger systems, some seemingly trivial events can have significant impact. For example, in 1961, mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz took a shortcut in entering data in a weather prediction model. He innocently entered .506 instead of the full numeric value of .506127, and the result was a completely different weather prediction. In a 1963 paper, Lorenz commented that if the theory were correct, "one flap of a seagull's wings could change the course of weather forever." He later changed that metaphor to a butterfly, and now the phenomenon is widely labeled the "butterfly effect" - where seemingly little events can lead to more significant changes to the larger system.

Though I'm a little cautious to source Wikipedia, here is the definition of the Butterfly Effect: "The butterfly effect refers to the idea that a butterfly's wings might create tiny changes in the atmosphere that may ultimately alter the path of a tornado, or might delay, accelerate, or even prevent the occurrence of a tornado in another location. The flapping wing represents a small change in the initial condition of the system, which causes a chain of events leading to large-scale alterations of events. Had the butterfly not flapped its wings, the trajectory of the system might have been vastly different. While the butterfly does not 'cause' the tornado in the sense of providing the energy for the tornado, it does 'cause' it in the sense that the flap of its wings is an essential part of the initial conditions resulting in a tornado, and without that flap, that particular tornado would not have existed."

So the whole concept of the Butterfly Effect (which is similar to the Domino Effect) relies on the notion that everything is part of a larger system - in which small changes in part of a system can result in larger changes to other parts of that system. Consider a ball rolling down a hill. If you start the rolling at the top of the hill rather than 20 feet from the top, or even five feet from the top, the change in velocity will determine how far it can roll. Similarly, if there are changes in wind speed, surface tension, or any number of other variables, the eventual landing spot of that ball will change.

Or consider the impact that small changes in our climate are having on various ecosystems. An increase of only 1 to 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit of warming is causing: changes in vegetation (notice the slightly longer growing season in Minnesota?!); wildlife to migrate to different habitats (notice how Canadian Geese don't always migrate south now?); icecaps to melt, which is causing oceans to rise (which has a huge impact on worldwide shoreline, particularly in coastal cities); ocean waters to warm (which is killing coral reefs as well as certain plankton, which impact marine life's shelter and food sources). Not to get into the politics - or even scientific root causes - of global warming, but the simple event of increasing worldwide temperatures by even 1 or 2 degrees is having dramatic effects on many ecosystems.

Or consider the impact of too much use (and not enough regulation) of mortgage-backed securities. People across the world began to enjoy a false sense of wealth as their real estate values artificially increased last decade. Many would take on increasing levels of debt (and so would our banks), but when several triggers impacted the system (oil price increases, monetary policy easing, and federal budget deficits, to name a few), the system began to unravel and real estate (and stock market) values began to plummet, which in turn caused a slowing in economic output, which led us into a worldwide recession. Many would argue that we have not addressed the underlying issues that caused the 2008-10 recession, and with additional factors beginning to emerge (instability in Europe, for example), we could be in for more tough economic times in the future. Yes, the worldwide economy is a highly interconnected system.

Most things in our lives are parts of larger systems, where various parts of the system interact and affect various other parts of the system. "Systems thinking," then, is the process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole.

In nature, systems thinking examples include ecosystems, in which various elements such as air, water, movement, plants, and animals work together to survive or perish. In the human body, various systems work together to sustain life. For example, the cardiovascular system (with the heart, veins, arteries, and blood) carries oxygen and nutrients throughout the body; the neurological system supports movement, response to stimulus, and decision making; the digestive system (mouth, esophagus, stomach, intestines, etc.) supports digestion; and so forth. If any one of these systems (or any part of any one of these systems) is not working properly, the body suffers disease, disability, or some form of sub-optimization that affects lifestyle or life in general. In automobiles, various systems work to enable the car to operate - the fuel system, the transmission system, the braking system, the heating/cooling system, the GPS

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navigation system, and so forth. All parts of the car work in combination to make the vehicle operate, and if any one of them fails, the car will not perform (or not perform well). In organizations, systems consist of people, information, and processes that work together to make an organization healthy or unhealthy.

Organizational systems theory dates back several decades, traced to early work of experts such as Deming, Ackoff, Senge, and Wheatley, among others. Collectively, these experts believed that organizations were highly complex systems, and that managers should therefore manage organizations as systems rather than only focusing on its individual parts. In fact, these experts believed managers should view problems as parts of an overall system, rather than only reacting to specific events, failures, or process problems (the result of which could contribute to unintended consequences).

I'm sure you've seen examples of myopic thinking within organizations. Take, for instance, an organization that introduces a new product without fully considering the impact of existing products? Or a certain engineering team reacting to a design defect by changing a spec, but not considering what impact that might have on the overall product performance (quality, warranty claims, customer complaints in the call center)? Or managers who change a staffing schedule because of workforce shortages without considering customer traffic patterns or the impact on direct customer service?

A systems perspective is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. And a systems perspective focuses on cyclical, rather than linear, cause and effect relationships within and between organizations.

This is where I believe many organizations struggle: they don't have the measurement systems or the general insights to understand how certain decisions create impacts within and outside the organization and/or how changes to parts of the system impact (positively or negatively) other parts of the system. Surgeons would never just start cutting on various body parts without considering the impact on the heart, brain, and other various organs and systems! So why do managers sometimes make changes to processes, technology, workforce policy, customer-facing processes, and so forth without first gathering requirements and then studying the impacts of various potential changes to the system?

I believe that successful management of overall organizational performance requires synthesis, alignment, and integration of the organization's various parts. According to the Baldrige framework:

"Synthesis" means looking at your organization as a whole and building on key organizational attributes, including core competencies, strategic objectives, action plans, and work systems.

"Alignment" means using the key linkages between areas of an organization - between its leadership system, planning process, customer focus processes, workforce processes, operations, and other processes - to ensure consistency of plans, processes, measures, and actions. The result of better alignment is more predictable and ever-improving outcomes.

"Integration" builds on alignment, so that the individual components of an organization's performance management system operate in a fully interconnected manner and deliver anticipated results.

For an organization, then, having a systems perspective means several things:

that senior leaders focus on strategic directions and customer/stakeholder needs.

that strategies are linked with work systems and key processes.

that an organization's resources are aligned to strategic objectives to improve overall performance.

that senior leaders monitor, respond to, and manage performance based on data - on results; in fact, that workers are all levels of an enterprise use measures, indicators, and organizational knowledge to make decisions and to improve the processes used throughout the system.

that organizations can learn: they operate as a closed loop systems, where data and information inform decision making so that processes can be adjusted, strategies can be "course-corrected," and core competencies can be fully leveraged.

In essence, a systems perspective means managing your whole organization, as well as its individual components, to achieve success. But that is hard to do, because 1) most of us were never trained in systems theory and really don't have the tools to manage organizations as systems, and 2) systems are inherently complex and our brains, as powerful as they are, are wired to handle comprehension of only parts of systems rather than viewing things in three, four, and five dimensions (recall Senge's "Fifth Dimension" book? - that was all about systems thinking).

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So what are managers to do? It sounds a little self-serving, but enlightened leaders from higher performing organizations (or at least those who aspire to be higher performing) use organizational assessments based on validated best practices to diagnose their systems - to verify what is working well in their systems and identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement. Much like an annual physical for your organization, these assessments uncover blind spots, redirect resources, inform planning, and refocus efforts on the most important areas of your organizational system.

There are many such diagnostics out there, but the Council offers three assessments based on the proven "Criteria for Performance Excellence" of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program:

the comprehensive Minnesota Quality Award (that offers a very thorough evaluation of the system with teams of trained Evaluators) - this offers the deepest, richest learning experience for the organization and its leaders, and motivates sustained improvement at all levels of the enterprise;
an Alternative Assessment (which leverages management experts, who help leaders identify their organization's improvement opportunities) - this is a "short cut" assessment, but still helps leaders identify where they should focus their organizational energy; and
a self assessment (which finds strengths and improvement opportunities through the collective lens of an organization's workforce) - this is the quickest and easiest assessment, which provides a roadmap for immediately improving organizational performance.

All three assessment processes are based on a validated set of best practices from leading organizations across the US; all three are diagnostic in nature and help inform leaders of where in their system they need to focus their attention and resources; all three promote organizational learning; and all three assist with resource optimization, process improvement, and improved and sustained results.

So the bottom line is this: your organization is a complex system, filled with hundreds - if not thousands - of independent work systems and processes, each designed to produce a set of outputs that presumably move the organization forward. In order to manage and improve - or at least better understand - the dynamics of your organization, leaders should have a framework to put those processes into context within the larger system, so that resources are optimized, negative consequences are minimized, and results are improved and sustained.

Part of the Council's mission is to help leaders better understand their systems so that performance excellence can be achieved and sustained. So like the butterfly, whose single wing flap could cause (or divert) a tornado several hundred miles away, a leader's decision to begin managing their organization as a system could (positively) change the trajectory of their enterprise's performance. All stakeholders in your system - your customers, workers, owners, partners - would benefit from that seemingly "little" decision.

By: Brian S. Lassiter
President, Minnesota Council for Quality
www.councilforquality.org

Learn What Drives Organizational Excellence: 2012 MN Quality Award Evaluator Training Feb 21-23 (Twin Cities)



Are you interested in learning more about what makes organizations successful?

Are you interested in helping other organizations -- such as schools, hospitals, non-profits, and businesses -- around the state improve their performance? Would you be interested in networking, learning, and sharing with others who feel the same way?

The Minnesota Council for Quality is seeking candidates for the 2012 Minnesota Quality Award Board of Evaluators. The first of three training sessions in 2012 is February 21-23 in the Twin Cities. Most Evaluators consider the experience to be among the most valuable of their careers. In fact, many have claimed that the experience and knowledge gained from this process rivals getting an MBA or advanced business degree.

Furthermore, Evaluators can earn college (undergrad and post-grad) credit for participating in training. For interested Evaluators, the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin-Stout both offer three (3) hours of credit in partnership with the Minnesota Council for Quality.

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Applications for new Evaluators are due January 27 (but can be extended). Applications for returning Evaluators (which only require updates from your most recent application) are due February 10.

In addition to the full training Feb 21-23, new Evaluators are also required to attend a one-day orientation (either Feb 1, 7, or 9 - you choose, and all in the Twin Cities).

We hope that you would consider (re)joining the Board of Evaluators and/or encourage others to do so. For more information on the process or benefits, please visit www.councilforquality.org/assess.cfm. To obtain an application, visit http://www.councilforquality.org/assess_eval_appl.cfm or contact Brian Lassiter (brian.lassiter@councilforquality.org).

Job Openings

If you or someone you know is looking for employment, the local companies below have a number of openings for their Wisconsin and Minnesota operations listed on their website. You can also visit the section website to view current postings at: <http://asq1216.homestead.com/JobGuide.html>.

Benchmark Electronics: <https://careers.bench.com/>

Trane / Ingersoll Rand: http://careers.ingersollrand.com/job_start.asp?user_id=

If your company has openings to post, please contact the newsletter editor or internet liaison noted below.

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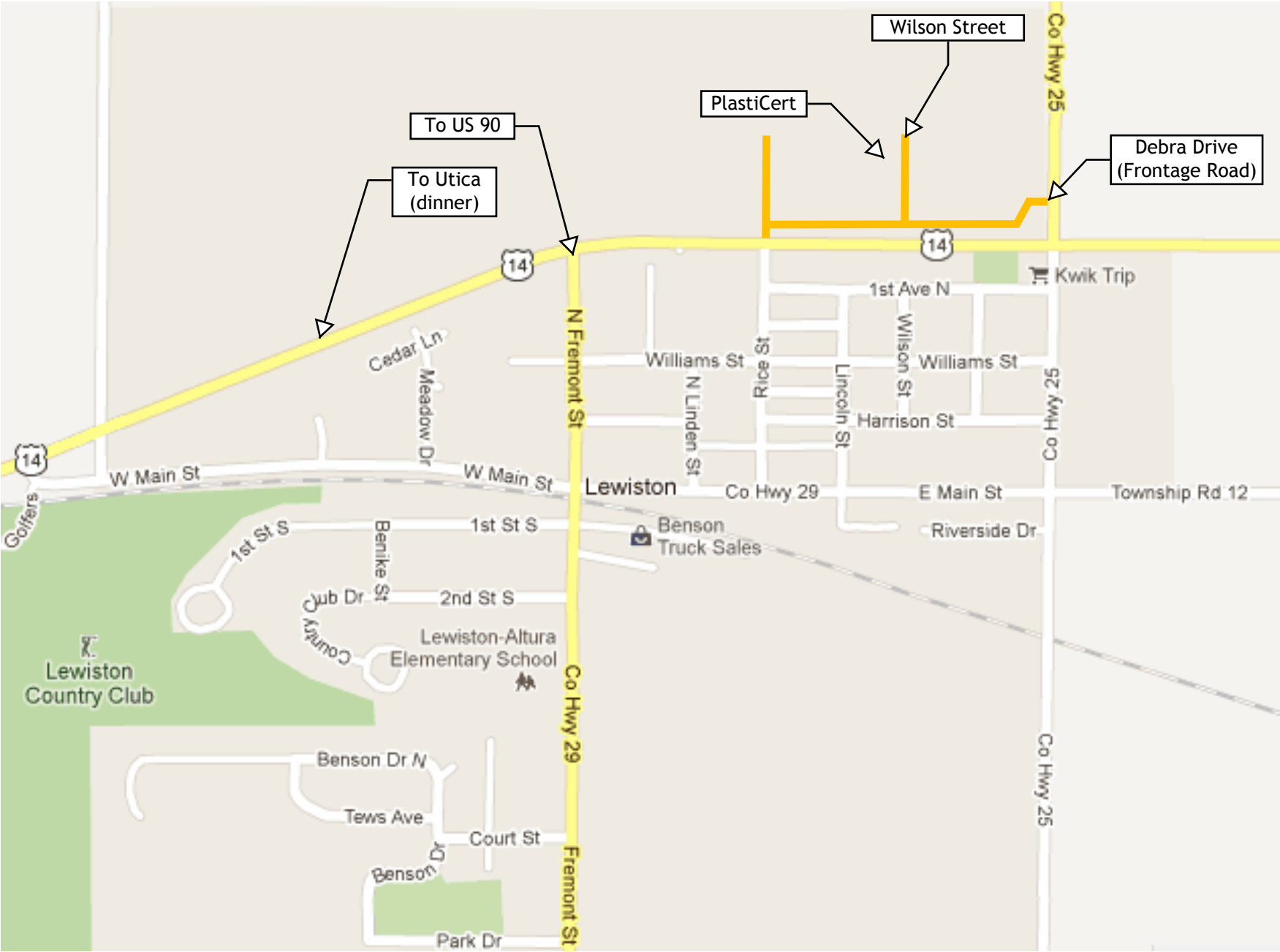
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January Meeting Dinner: Golden Harvest Cafe and Bar, 135 Highway 14 West, Utica, MN

