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Welcome to our March 2015 edition



In this month's edition we are carrying a special feature from the Chartered Quality Institute of the UK by David Armstrong head of profession at the CQI on the newly created CQI Competency Framework.

We continue our move to partner with our Southern African neighbours and give feedback on our recent visit to the Zambian Copper Belt for a SHEQ conference organised by one of our SAQI partners. I have also used this visit to reflect on my personal travel experience relating to Quality and Safety.

SAQI is currently broadening its approach to Quality techniques and improvement tools and we are giving a brief description on the A3 methodology primarily used in the automotive industry but can also be applicable in all sectors of the economy.

We continue with the theme of Corporate Governance when our regular columnist Terry Booysen talks to us about Boardroom breakup.

As ever Dr. Richard Hayward gives us insights into Schools Quality.

I am pleased to report that the members of the SAQI Linked In group continues to grow but we would welcome more members and particularly ask existing members to post comments for new discussion or join in and give their opinions on Quality matters already being discussed in this forum.

As ever, I would be happy to receive comments relating to our articles or any other items of interest relating to quality at exec@saqi.co.za

Yours in Quality

Paul Harding
SAQI MD

Quality:
helping South Africans live,
learn and work better



Introducing the future of quality

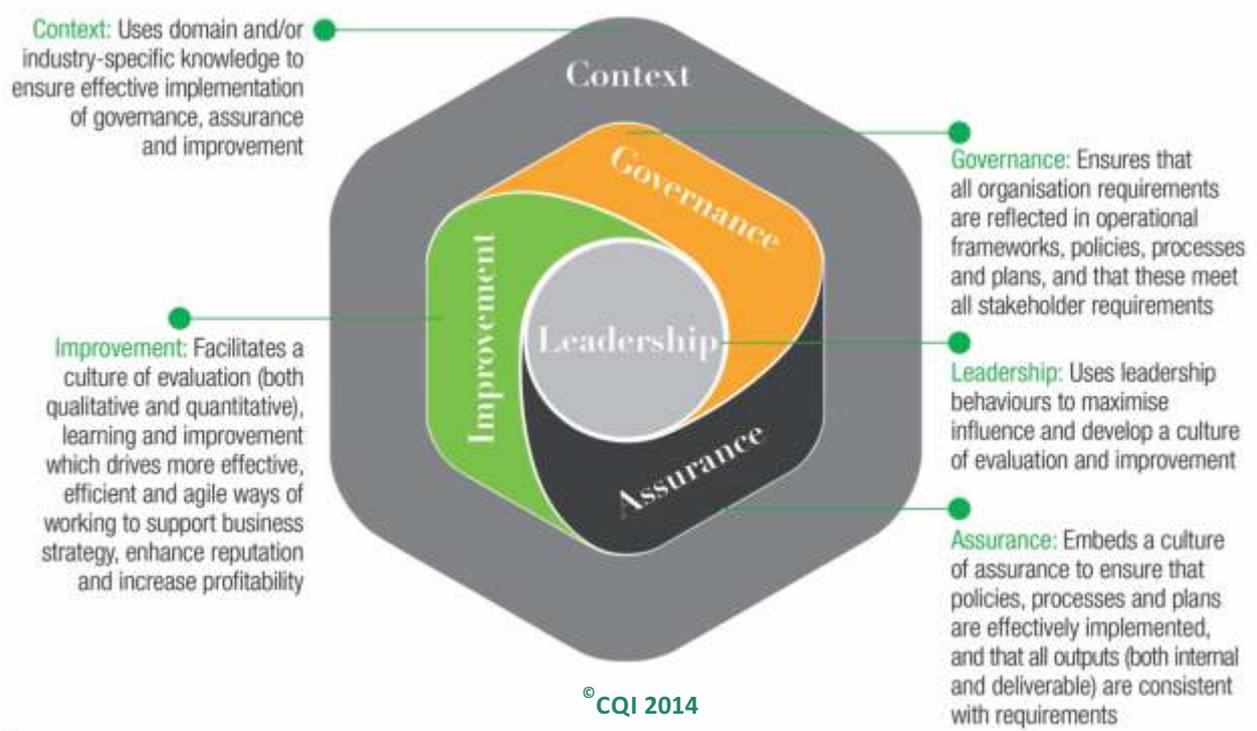
By David Armstrong, Head of Profession at The Chartered Quality Institute

For all organisations, the delivery of high-quality products and services is essential. The consequences of failure grow ever more significant in today's world of increasing customer and stakeholder expectations, regulatory oversight and use of social media to broadcast success or failure. Yet we live in a world where there are still too many organisations failing to deliver against all stakeholder requirements. Ultimately this can cause harm to society, damage lives and waste money.

At The Chartered Quality Institute (CQI) we understand that to sustain delivery of high-quality products and services and to operate in a way that meets stakeholder needs, organisations must establish effective systems of governance and assurance, and commit to a culture of objective evaluation and continuous improvement.

The quality profession must ensure it is capable of meeting this challenge. In short, we need to create a world where Governance, Assurance and Improvement are at the heart of every organisation. That goal has driven us during our journey with leading businesses to create the new CQI Competency Framework.

Introducing the CQI Competency Framework



The framework is structured around what we do: **Governance, Assurance and Improvement**, the **Context**, which we work in, and the **Behaviours** we must show.

It provides an overview of the competencies that the profession requires to do its job effectively by:

- Providing a clear benchmark for competence for use by the CQI, employers and individuals
- Helping individuals plan their career development
- Helping employers develop their own competency frameworks.

Understanding each element of the framework provides the basis for employers and individuals to identify the gaps in their organisation or own skillsets.

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Leadership

Leadership in this context is about the individual's personal values and their commitment to seek information and understanding, even when this might require a considerable degree of persistence, persuasion, charm, influence and personal courage.

The purpose of this element of the Competency Framework is to allow individuals to assess which behavioural skills they are already exhibiting and which ones they may need or like to develop.

Not all quality professionals want to be Chief Executives, but they still need to adopt leadership behaviours. You must be inquisitive and act as the conscience of an organisation or product/service delivery team, be passionate to see improvement and committed to achieving stakeholder satisfaction. That means being a leader not a follower, being enquiring rather than accepting, engaged not remote, inspirational not energy sapping, central to the success of the endeavour and not a dead weight.

Governance

Governance is about defining what should be done and how, and being certain that approach is fit for purpose.

The role of the quality professional is not to take direct responsibility for establishing good governance, but to question whether governance is effective. Governance is always owned at the point where accountability for a particular activity and outcome resides. For example, the head of Human Resources (HR) defines HR policies and processes for activities, such as Personal Development Reviews (PDR). There is never any suggestion that the PDR process is owned by the quality function. However, the role of the quality professional is to ask whether a policy or process for PDRs is required, to what extent it should be mandated, if it has been adequately defined and whether it's considered to be fit for purpose by the stakeholders – in this case management and employees.

Not all quality professionals will be engaged in the work of governance but since it's central to the success of the organisation and delivery teams, it must also become central to the profession. Governance is a growth area because it has the most significant impact in terms of organisational robustness and protecting/enhancing reputation. We're best placed to develop organisational capability in this regard because our profession is already heavily involved in things such as BMS, quality management systems, certifications and standards. We have to raise our game so we can better engage with organisations to ensure their framework for governance is better than it has been in the past.

Assurance

When referring to Assurance at the CQI, we mean the independent evaluation of:

- A. 'How things are being done' – with respect to what was intended (process assurance)
- B. 'What is being produced' – with respect to stated and unstated requirements (product assurance).

It is important to add that 'outputs' encompass both internal and external deliverables. Assurance activities are the means to determine whether stakeholder's requirements are being met (product assurance) and if the organisation is operating in the way that was intended (process assurance).

Quality professionals are usually directly tasked with process assurance activities and work on behalf of both the organisation and external stakeholders to determine how work is undertaken with respect to the defined policies and processes.

In this context, the quality profession is the collective conscience of the organisation, certainly never a police force, and as we all know, a 'body' with a conscience is a pretty dangerous thing and, as we also know, it's sometimes extremely tempting to ignore what your 'conscience' is telling you!

We need to embrace the challenge of thinking more strategically about assurance and what a successful assurance approach might look like when considering all of our stakeholders' needs. We will need better understanding of the business, the context in which we are operating and we will certainly need to develop our leadership and behavioural skills to ensure successful engagement with both practitioners and senior leaders within the organisation.

Improvement

At the most fundamental level, the purpose of continual improvement is the drive to meet or exceed stakeholders' requirements. In the context of the CQI framework, Improvement consists of three separate activities:

- Collecting objective evidence (quantitative and qualitative) of status and well-being
- Evaluation
- Identifying how to change things

In most organisations, the capability and performance of a particular function, for example engineering, design, HR, finance and IT, are the responsibility of the most senior function manager. This is the group that primarily defines capability and performance within the business, not only as a result of the people they recruit, the policies and processes they establish and the investments they decide to make in tools and technologies – but also by the culture and values they establish in how people approach their work.

Quality professionals must develop and facilitate effective process and product assurance. This is the result of a culture where decision-making is based on objective evidence. They must work with the rest of the organisation to ensure measures are appropriately reviewed and that actions are taken to continuously improve performance. Very often the quality

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professional is well placed to support improvement activities, whether through the adoption of suitable tools and techniques such as root cause analysis, use of EFQM, Six Sigma, Lean, statistical process control, or by process re-engineering.

However, not all quality professionals are comfortable with influencing the senior management teams who are often central to achieving changes in capability and performance. Too often our profession reduces the challenge of strategic/business improvement to one of process improvement.

The challenge to the profession is to work in a holistic way, recognising the importance of objective evaluation and improvement not only at the product or service delivery level, but also for the organisation as a whole.

Context

Context simply means understanding the environment in which you are working. Primarily, context is determined by identifying your stakeholders and all of their requirements and as a result understanding what success will look like for the work you are part of.

The responsibilities of the quality professional are entirely informed by the context in which they are working. It follows that having a number of leadership and behavioural skills, and understanding the principles of good Governance, Assurance and Improvement (GAI) will never be enough if the context in which these principles must be applied is not understood.

It follows that if the stakeholders are different, then the requirements for governance will also be different. Furthermore, since the activities undertaken will be hugely dependent on context, it also follows that the approach to assurance and improvement must be dependent on context also.

A quality professional cannot be successful if they have an inadequate understanding of context, since the stakeholders associated with the work being undertaken define both the requirements and the success criteria, and as a result the role of the quality professional in helping to establish the appropriate requirements for GAI.

Not understanding the context equals not understanding requirements – it's like going to a wedding dressed in fancy dress or playing football in a tutu.

Next steps

We have taken on board feedback from our Corporate Partners and are focused on developing a series of tools and techniques to help individuals and organisations deliver stakeholder requirements, to the best of their ability. That approach has been integral to the development process. We have worked hand in hand with industry to ensure that the model delivers what is needed by businesses.

The first of these is the Competency Assessment Tool, which will allow organisations to identify the capability of individuals and recognise where they may need to upskill staff or fulfil a gap in their workforce. To support organisations we will be following the tool with a series of learning and development assets, and a portfolio of qualifications, which are aligned to the CQI Competency Framework.

Looking ahead, to improve businesses on a global scale it's essential we share our ambitions and continuously remind business and industry, educational establishments, peer institutions and regulatory bodies that to deliver on quality, we must put Governance, Assurance and Improvement at the heart of every organisation.

To find out more about the CQI Competency Framework, please visit the [CQI website](#).

This article has been specifically prepared for the SAQI eQe by our partners at the CQI in the UK for which SAQI is very grateful. (Ed)



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Feedback from the SHEQ International Conference

Held in Kitwe - Zambia on the 27 February 2015

SAQI partners Quality Business Consultants Holdings Limited held a one- day conference on Occupational Health & Safety, Environment and Quality guided by International Standards OHSAS 18001, ISO 14001 and ISO 9001. The theme of the conference was: "Cultivating an un-paralleled Quality, Environment and Safety systems Culture in Zambia."

The Conference was aimed at creating a forum for the exchange of technical know-how on improving Occupational Health & Safety, Environmental and Quality Management in local enterprises. It is suggested an increase in fatalities, environmental aspects, rejects and reworks are often worsened by regulation that negatively affect the Zambian industry and are attributed to various reasons. Those reasons include a lack of efficient and effective management systems. The consequences are that resources intended for value addition are being diverted to addressing incidents that are avoidable and costly and this eats into the bottom line. The picture below shows Joseph Mwansa, Paul Harding and Howard Sikwela the Permanent Secretary of the Copper Belt province.



The Conference therefore, provided a forum for information exchange on occupational health & safety, Environment and

Quality issues that were impacting on various industries. The conference drew participants from private and government agencies and was ably facilitated by Dr. Bernard Chishala the Chairman of Quality Business Consultants Board.

Below is the main speech by Government read by the Permanent Secretary of the Copper belt Province, Howard Sikwela.

"DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES, INVITED INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER MR PAUL HARDING, MEDIA PERSONNEL DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY GRATITUDE TO MY PROVINCIAL MINISTER ON WHO'S BEHALF I RISE TO DELIVER THIS SPEECH. MY THANKS TO THE ORGANIZERS, SPONSORS AND THE VARIOUS BUSINESS HOUSES REPRESENTED AT THIS CONFERENCE.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM WELL INFORMED THAT THIS CONFERENCE HAS BEEN CONVENED TO SHARE EXPERIENCES IN INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, BEST PRACTICES AND NEW APPROACHES IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

I AM ALIVE TO THE FACT THAT THESE AREAS HAVE BECOME FUNDAMENTAL TO BUSINESS NOW MORE THAN EVER BEFORE DUE TO THE DEVELOPMENTS IN INDUSTRIALIZATION AND CORPORATE ENTERPRISES.

THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD, HUMAN SECURITY AND QUALITY HUMAN WELFARE HAS NECESSITATED THAT ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO MATTERS OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, WHILST THE NEED FOR ENSURING THAT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SERVES THIS GENERATION AS WELL AS GENERATIONS TO COME AFTER THIS, REQUIRES THAT ALL RESOURCES ARE PRUDENTLY UTILISED.

MOREOVER, WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT IF ANY ENTERPRISE WISHES TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE, SUCH A BUSINESS MUST OF NECESSITY, ENSURE THAT IT PRODUCES GOODS AND SERVICES THAT WILL NOT

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ONLY SATISFY CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS, BUT WILL ALSO EXCEED CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS.

ALL THESE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, REQUIRE GREAT AWARENESS, GENUINE COMMITMENT AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE TOOLS AND SKILLS IN HEALTH & SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS BY NATURE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, EXIST TO DO AMONG OTHER THINGS, BRING NATIONS TO EQUAL STANDARDS, HARMONISE LEGISLATION AND EQUIVALENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE.

THEREFORE, IN ORDER TO MEET SET STANDARDS AND ENABLE INDUSTRY TO CONFORM TO SUCH STANDARDS, CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IS NEEDED.

SO, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THESE DEVELOPMENTS, MY GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED MECHANISMS UNDER MINISTRIES OF MINES, COMMERCE, HEALTH AND LABOUR.

THESE MECHANISMS, RANGE FROM INSPECTORATES, DEPARTMENTS AND BOARDS THAT ENSURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ON THESE ISSUES.

BUT IN ORDER TO SUCCEED, SUCH POLICIES NEED TO BE ROLLED OUT, BY BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR. THE LACK OF INTEREST IN THESE ISSUES DOES NOT REFLECT INDUSTRIES' COMMITMENT, YET GOVERNMENT WILL STILL DEMAND COMPLIANCE TO LEGISLATION AS WELL AS STANDARDS. IT IS THEREFORE, MY PLEA TO INDUSTRY TO TAKE SUCH MEETINGS SERIOUSLY.

THE PROVINCIAL OFFICE WILL BE INTERESTED TO HEAR WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS THIS CONFERENCE WILL CRAFT FOR GOVERNMENT.

I THEREFORE, ON BEHALF OF MY MINISTER AND INDEED ON MY OWN BEHALF DECLARE THIS CONFERENCE OFFICIALLY OPEN.

I THANK YOU."

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN MESSAGES FROM THE SPEECHES

The International Guest Speaker was Mr. Paul Harding- Executive Director of the South Africa Quality Institute. He presented a paper whose title was "Exploring Quality and Leadership". Mr. Harding emphasized the need for quality leadership in promoting teamwork in the work place as opposed to encouraging employees to work as individuals or in silos. Examples were given of how the process approach should be introduced when implementing a Quality Management System.

He also pointed out that personnel that are performing work that affect quality must be competent and he demonstrated how this can be measured. Despite his busy schedule, the Permanent Secretary stayed for Mr. Harding's presentation. We sincerely thank both.

Other Guest speakers included Mr. Kamamba Wamui of National Airports Corporation (on behalf of the Director of Airport Services, Mr. Prince Chintimbwe. His message to the conference was the need to instill a quality culture in organizations. This was amplified further by Mr. William Mtonga of Konkola Copper Mines in his personal capacity.

Dr Sichisambwe of Copperbelt University informed the conference that the school of graduate was offering MBA's on Quality management and stood ready to add value to the quality management systems in Zambia. He informed the conference that a research project was under way on the causes of variances in packaging weights against specifications in many products in Zambia, pointing to lack of consistency in applying the standards.

Mr. Davies Munina of Zamefa called upon Government to implement the Occupational Health and Safety Act no. 36 of 2010. In his reply, Mr. Joseph Mwale, representing the Occupational Health and Safety Institute Board replied that indeed this ACT has been implemented. Mrs. Harriet Nakazwe Angetile, Manager SHEQ at National Airports concurred stating that they had been visited by the Institute and that they were encouraged to start implementing the ACT.

Mr. Lotani Zulu of TAZAMA informed the conference that TAZAMA can handle some hazards of a carbon nature on a commercial basis at their institution but the conference resolved to invite ZEMA to clarify some aspects of the Environmental Act the next time around. The concern is how to handle other toxic hazardous material generally in the country as it was learnt during plenary, that some organizations were stock piling.

Mr. Joseph Mwansa's main message was for the SHEQ practitioners to rise up and help respective Managements realize their goals and objectives. "SHEQ activities must align to the main strategic business objectives and only when we do that are we going to be regarded as strategic partners in our respective organizations and not just as a necessary cost center".

Awards

The Conference presented an award to Mr. Likezo Mbambala of Mopani Copper mines, for being the best student in the ISO 9001:2008 Lead Auditor Course. The award was a return air ticket to Johannesburg in South Africa and was sponsored by Interair (pty) Ltd.

Interair flies to Ndola twice a week and is the preferred choice for Copperbelt and DRC travellers. The conference is proud to be associated with Interair and indeed grateful for the sponsorship. The conference congratulated Mr. Likezo, and wished him an enjoyable trip to South Africa.

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The conference also paid special thanks to the Airport Manager (APM) of Ndola Mr. Joseph Mumbi for the time, guidance and dedication for ensuring the conference was a success.

Times of Zambia also deserved the conference's gratitude for sponsoring the advert.

The conference also pays respect and gratitude to the Mine Manager of FQML, Managements of Mopani Copper mines, Mansa trades, Copperbelt University, National Airports, Tazama, Moba Hotel, Zamefa, Quatro, and Bridgetech. Also to Mr William Mtonga and Mr Pascal Chewe in their individual capacities.

The conference praised and paid a glowing tribute to Mr. Paul Harding for gracing and enriching the Conference and to Dr Chishala for ably facilitating the Conference.



SAQI would like to thank Joseph Mwansa for contributing this article to the SAQI E quality Edge. For more information contact:



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“Quality is not an act, it is a habit.”



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Travel is always good or interesting but never bad

By Paul Harding SAQI MD

My wife, who has travelled the world extensively, always tells me that travelling is either good or interesting but never bad.

This month's newsletter carries a report on the recently held SHEQ conference in Zambia. The conference discussed all the various aspects of Safety, Health, Environment and Quality and it also referred to the various international standards in place to assess performance. However, how do all these standards apply in real life daily situations and not just two weeks before the audit? I would like to reflect on my recent visit to Zambia to attend the SHEQ conference.

First of all let's talk about my departure from OR Tambo airport in Johannesburg in relation to quality. I use this airport on a fairly regular basis and I must admit that normally it is one of the best managed and efficient airports to be found anywhere in the world. I flew through the on-line check-in and security control with no delays or problems. Then we hit the bottle neck. On my side of the rails to queue for passport control there were six desks. Only two of them were manned and one of the desk personnel had an obvious problem with a passenger. The passenger desperately took papers out of his bag presumably to convince the passport official that he was legitimate. This took forever and in the meantime with only one cubicle operating the queue grew and grew. The passport controller then left his desk with his passenger to seek assistance from a senior level. Now there was only one operator manning passport control. As a quality professional I was not stressing out as I had given myself plenty of time before departure. Not so for a lot of other passengers who were now starting to visibly panic. There was definitely an element of Customer dissatisfaction.

We now get to the boarding gate but the screen shows a different flight to the gate on the boarding pass. Am I in the right queue I wonder? I go to the flight information board that tells me I am at the right gate. However, it is obvious that there is a fair amount of confusion in the queue. A quick word with an airport official tells me I am in the right queue but the screen is wrong and they are trying to fix it.

The flight to Ndola airport on the Northern Copper Belt was great with a friendly cabin crew and a perfect landing. On arrival at Ndola, I was amazed that someone was on the tarmac to meet me and escort me through the landing formalities. I have always wondered what it would be like to be a VIP. I was then greeted by the Airport Manager and then realised that he knew I was the keynote speaker at the conference he was also attending and wanted to show me he knew about exceeding customer expectations. My flight was full of FIFA officials as there was a big soccer match taking place in Ndola at the weekend so I had an apology from the conference organiser telling me that all the top hotels were fully booked. The Airport Manager took me to the substitute hotel but what a pleasure. Pictures on the wall of Bryan Habana, the golfer JB Kruger and also the Cheeta's rugby team with the hotel owner made me feel at home. Excellent service and friendly people made me feel very special. Dinner at the "Copper Canyon Spur", where else on the Copper Belt, finished off a glorious evening.

We were up early the next morning for a road trip through to Kitwe where the SHEQ conference was being held. By now I was getting used to the friendliness and hospitality of the Copper Belt people. The roads were not the four lane highways that we will find between

Johannesburg and Pretoria but were never the less free of potholes with only the occasional speed bumps. The conference went off very smoothly and we were graced by the presence of the Permanent Secretary of the Copper Belt province. All in all it was a very successful day of quality.

Now the interesting bit

Early the next morning my host and conference organiser Joseph was at my hotel to take me down to Lusaka which was about a 350 km journey from Ndola. In true quality style Joseph had had his car serviced the previous day to prepare for the journey down the famous Cape to Cairo road. The road out of Ndola was initially congested but we were soon out of town and on our way on the open road.

We had just passed a police check point and picked up speed when suddenly there was a loud bang and I witnessed the front nearside wheel of the car flying passed the front fender and disappearing into the bush. Now this is where the Health and Safety theory comes into practice. Joseph had completed a defensive driving course and knew exactly what to do in this sort of situation. He managed to keep the car under control and we finished up on the rough verge off the road all in one piece albeit minus a front wheel. I am not sure about the quality of the mechanic who had serviced the car. I have mentioned how friendly the Copper Belt people are and within seconds the locals came to our assistance and one of them disappeared into the bush to rescue the front wheel. Then the "Angels from Heaven" arrived. A pick up truck pulled in behind us and informed us that they were a mobile transport maintenance crew that patrolled the road to service the heavy transport trucks. In no time at all the car was up on a couple of jacks and the wheel was ready to be put back. Now of course you will ask the question, "But you didn't have any wheel nuts." Now for years I have been giving problem solving training courses and asked the question to the delegates, "What would you do in a situation where you were changing a tyre and another car ran over all your wheel nuts and they disappeared down a drain hole?" Of course the answer is you take a nut from each of the other wheels and put them on the replacement wheel. Well in this case there were 6 nuts on each wheel and Joseph, being a quality professional, also carried a couple of spares in his glove compartment.

We didn't try to drive to Lusaka in the damaged car but we did manage to drive slowly back towards Ndola and park the car safely at the police control point and arrange another car to take us through to our destination in Lusaka.

The moral of this story is that in real life we have Quality and Safety challenges that we need to address and no amount of planning is going to eliminate every potential quality or safety hazard. Having a standard or attending a conference in itself will not guarantee results. It is how we practice these principles in situations that are out of the ordinary that will make us Quality or Safety practitioners.

I will finish by giving you some food for thought by quoting one of my favourite sayings.

"It is far better to be born lucky than clever"

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There is no “I” in A3

By Jacques Snyders SAQI facilitator

As we, South Africans, are glued to our TV screens every weekend, following the ICC Cricket World Cup, it is quite evident, that cricket, as of many sports, is a team game. Although we have a “genius” with the bat, such as AB De Villiers, it's not up to a single individual to get us to the finals. That could also be said for solving problems in our organisations. Too long have we relied on a super genius “Fire-fighter” to solve daily problems, which seem to repeat themselves one month later.

Paramount to Toyota Motor Corporation's fame, is its ability to continuously improve operational performance. Central to this ability is the teaching of engineers, supervisors and managers in a structured problem-solving approach that uses the “A3 Problem-Solving Report”. A3 has become quite popular in the last couple of years, as the Structure for solving problems, and has been taught as part of the Lean manufacturing methodology. The question however is, do we really understand what A3 thinking is all about?

Looking at how some organisations that have adopted A3 problem solving, and are using A3 Thinking, it is clear that in some cases, it is merely a format to display the steps used to solve a particular problem. It is sometimes no more than a one-page story board. I have also witnessed how this is used by some consultants within the Six sigma frame work. This has been used as part of the “Control” phase of the Six Sigma DMAIC framework as a typical storyboard format and formed part of the project handover to the business owners.

Although the A3 format does show the story line, of what aspired during the process of solving problems, it should not be mistaken with the true spirit behind the A3, which is all about teaching & mentorship.

The power of A3 problem solving is not in the A3 format itself, or the structured approach of ensuring that the problem is well defined before continuing, but it's more in the fact that it forms the integral part of a team orientated problem solving session and a document to be used to coach and mentor individuals.

Too long have QA Managers, passed the problem on to the Engineer, to go and find the root cause of the problem and solve it. Too long have Engineers engaged with the team leaders, and supervisors, and audited the process, to see if he or she could see something that is not within the process description. Too long have we forced the team leaders, and supervisors to take action against the operator who committed the “crime”. It's time for us to place the respect for people to the forefront and train

our engineers on the skills to facilitate team orientated problems solving sessions. We then must respect the operators, and involve them, by challenging their thought process in an effort to solve problems effectively and to create thinking people.

World class organisations like Toyota did not become world-class because of the formats they were using, but rather what lies behind the methodology, which is the culture of respect for people, and hence the importance of involving people in problem solving activities . A3's should be used as a tool to teach, coach and mentor young engineers and operational people. It is the mentor, who should guard the trainee against jumping to what seems logical root causes and solutions, but rather use the A3 as a systematic problem solving methodology to guide him through the process, and to widen this thinking process.

A3's were not designed to just solve daily problems, but rather to make the process of problem solving clearer, and teachable, in such a way, that trainees can learn to become better problem solvers.

About the Author



Jacques Snyders has 19 years of experience in Operations Management, which includes Production, Quality, Engineering Management as well as Business Improvement.

He is a Senior Member of the South African Quality Institute.

SAQI has now added “A3 Problem Solving” to its suite of training courses. For more information contact vanessa@saqi.co.za



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Board Evaluation – When Boards 'Break'

By Terrance M. Booyesen and reviewed by Andrew Johnston (Altron Limited: Group Company Secretary)

It is interesting to Google the words 'broken boards'. Unsurprisingly, the search only reveals matters relating to broken skate boards or surf boards, and there is no mention of companies or organisations, where their boards have been 'broken' so to speak by its members. Interestingly -- although there was a recent political connotation in this context where a President of a country has been accused of 'breaking' a Parliament -- one need not have much imagination to liken such an accusation in a similar context of a Chairman and/or the members of a board being accused of 'breaking' their board.



Whilst this analogy is used figuratively, in practice it may not be that difficult to 'break' or seriously damage a board of an organisation, and more so if good governance practices are not evident. Expectedly, where there are poor or no governance frameworks in place, the organisation is bound to experience negative consequences at some point in time, and this inevitably could lead to various forms of organisational dysfunction. And this is where the board will be held to account -- in many instances -- collectively and at an individual level.

South Africa has seen many examples where organisations have suffered serious blows as a result of embattled boards that have not been singularly aligned to serve the best interests of the organisation; as is required by its directors who serve as its fiduciary officers. Some of the notable, more recent South African examples of organisations that have been mired by various boardroom controversy that come to mind are the Landbank, SAA, SABC, Eskom, Cricket SA, African Bank, Athletics South Africa (ASA), the South African Post Office and Pretoria Portland Cement. Whilst many of the boardroom culprits are often let easily off the hook with massive 'departure bonuses', one really does need to question the immense damage which is caused to the organisation when these situations occur.

"Behavioral psychologists and organizational learning experts agree that people and organizations cannot learn without feedback. No matter how good a board is, it's bound to get better if it's reviewed intelligently."

Jeffrey A. Sonnenfeld

The trouble is that this practice is happening far too often with little consequences if any - which is not good for the organisation, its stakeholders, the market and not least the overall economy which ultimately bears the financial burden of what may be construed as reckless behaviour.

Besides trying to 'regulate' the appointment of directors in an organisation's Memorandum of Incorporation or its Constitution, organisations should pay far greater attention to the manner in which they appoint and govern the behaviour of their board members, including the chairman. The process of determining whether or not the board is performing at its optimum -- both at a collective and individual level -- will be determined by the *frequency* and *manner* in which the organisation genuinely commits itself to being rigorously evaluated. In simple terms, if any member of the board is found to be under-performing in their duties, they should be immediately removed.



Although this may seem harsh, one is reminded that the role of directors is one of subservience. If they fail in their duty to protect *all* the interests of the organisation in every way possible, then a number of their inactions must render them unqualified for their positions as directors.

A board evaluation -- also known as a board assessment or board review -- is a process which aims to assess, inter alia, the performance and the dynamics of the board on a variety of measures. These evaluations can be conducted either

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internally, by using a facilitator within the organisation or externally, by using an independent service provider. There are various methodologies used to assess the performance of the board and its directors, and some of these include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, document analysis and even observation methods. Importantly, each methodology has advantages and disadvantages that should be carefully weighed before deciding which method, or combination of methods is best suited for the organisation.

Unfortunately, many organisations still treat board evaluations as a 'tick-box' exercise, instead of using the evaluation to improve, inter alia, the board's performance and its dynamics. In these instances, it is hardly surprising to see the number of boards that fail, and this is costing organisations dearly. Ultimately, board evaluations must be for the health of the organisation, and should not be influenced by the personal interests or preferences of directors. By conducting a meaningful board evaluation, the board may benefit in a number of ways. These include, (i) strengthening relationships between the directors, the CEO and management; (ii) clarifying the strategic direction of the organisation; and (iii) improving the decision-making capabilities of the board.

To experience the true benefit from board evaluations, the evaluations must be carefully considered before the process is commenced. Board evaluations should be carried out diligently, intelligently and thoroughly. Undoubtedly a certain level of 'maturity' will be required amongst the members of the board if the board evaluation is to be conducted by an external service provider or facilitator rather than it being conducted internally. The outcome of such evaluations may often result in some tough truths being revealed about the functioning and effectiveness of the board and its members.

"Board assessment is both a critical opening step and concluding phase of the board-building framework. Done well, it provides fantastic opportunity for boards to monitor their progress and renew their commitment to doing good work. Done badly... it can turn into a mechanical exercise that tests the board's patience and creates little or no value."

Beverly A. Behan

Boards of directors who genuinely seek to improve their performance, will seek to continuously 'up their game' for the benefit of the organisation, least so for themselves. But for those directors who are self-serving, they continue to pay lip-service to this critical function and therefore the evaluation is essentially ineffective, and this causes substantial harm to the board and the organisation as a whole.

The day is fast approaching when shareholders (and even employees and customers who have become disgruntled by shoddy directors performance) will institute class actions

against these miscreants masquerading as strategic organisational leaders.

More information regarding CGF can be found at www.cgf.co.za

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Quality in Schools

Many of our readers are parents themselves or interact often with children. We have asked our education editor, a retired headmaster, to share thoughts on how to get Quality principles and practices instilled in young people.

Nothing to be ashamed of

Richard Hayward

We show so much care and concern when a child's physically ill. If the youngster has been involved in an accident or had an operation, family and friends give much loving support. Parents are often willing to share information about the doctor's diagnosis and how the child is recuperating.

In contrast, how do many parents react if their child has a mental problem? How do they respond when the child displays anxiety, bipolar and depressive disorders? How do they react if their child has eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia? Are they just as willing to share their worries and thoughts with others? Sometimes they might display an undeserved sense of guilt or shame.

Many teenagers are by nature prone to mood swings from high elation to despair. There's an enormous range of mental health issues that might appear. So often, these issues are ignored or downplayed. Parents can get angry and overwhelmed by such situations. Lacking patience, parents might despairingly tell their children to, 'Snap out of it!'

The child with mental health problems need as much professional support as those being given medical and surgical treatment. When a child isn't helped effectively when there are mental health issues, those disorders could remain and even grow in adult life.

Living in South Africa in 2015 is really tough for many ... and especially young people. Millions live in families where either one or both parents cannot find employment. The resulting financial hardships and poverty can impact negatively on home life. Young people can be despondent about their chances of finding a job. If they're in the fortunate minority of having been given a quality school education, they soon learn that the opportunities to enter tertiary education are still tiny in comparison to the huge demand. Levels of violence and lawlessness in society are huge. Life is too often lived on a dangerous edge.

The South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG) has done recent research which included analysing teenage

behaviour. Amongst their findings were these disturbing statistics (The Citizen, 19 and 21 February 2015):

- * Young people between the ages of 10 and 19 are one of the highest risk groups for suicide in the country.
- * One in five teenagers tries to commit suicide.
- * About 38% of this group felt so depressed that they needed professional help.
- * Some 29% of teenagers who attempted suicide also needed medical attention.

Family members and teachers can do much to help identify depressive behaviour in a child. When the normally enthusiastic child doesn't like school any more or starts showing anti-social behaviour, it's time to try and understand the reasons. When there're traumatic events at home such as a bereavement, divorce or forms of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, the onset of depressive behaviour is understandable.

What can parents do? The most obvious starting point is to talk to the child. Simply by chatting, the child can often be helped to work out the solutions to many common mental issues. So, for example, the child can learn the skills to improve his relationships with classmates and teachers. Today an increasing number of schools have counsellors and social workers. Talk to them and also the child's teacher. Often they put parents at ease by reminding them that the child is simply 'going through a phase.' Common-sense advice on dealing with the matter is often given.

Yet there are those times when the behaviour of the child needs specialist professional help. The psychologist and sometimes the psychiatrist need to step in. Family, friends and especially the child, need to accept that there's nothing abnormal in getting such help. It's the most caring and sensible thing one can do. By so doing, the child is given help that can be of life-long benefit. Everyone needs to remember when getting mental help: There's absolutely nothing to be ashamed of.

Dr Richard Hayward does Professional Development programmes under the aegis of SAQI. Seven of the programmes have been endorsed by SACE (South African Council for Educators) and earn PD points. Certificates are issued by SAQI. For more details, please go to www.saqi.co.za (click Quality Education) or www.MySchool.co.za (click on Benefits). Richard's contact number is 011 888 3262. Poor schools are sponsored.

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