

Gazeta Global

The Need for and Importance of Quality in Trinidad and Tobago

In this constantly changing and competitive world, countries are in different stages of the quality movement. In many countries quality has been practiced for a long time, while for others, quality is a more recent phenomenon. The country of Trinidad and Tobago has reengineered its economic and trading policies, and updated its quality practices in order to effectively compete in the global marketplace.

The two-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago is the most diversified and industrialized economy in the English-speaking Caribbean. A stable, democratic political system and continuous economic growth make this country a regional economic and political leader. The government of Prime Minister Basdeo Panday (elected in November 1995) has continued the sound micro- and macroeconomic policies of the previous administration, and has shown a commitment to innovative economic improvements.

The National Quality Council (NQC) is the government body that was established to support and promote quality throughout Trinidad and Tobago. NQC's primary responsibility is to ensure the improvement of national performance and international competitiveness among organizations and sectors. NQC initiatives include the creation of national quality awards and the institutionalization of quality in the education, health, small business, and transportation sectors.

Since 1974, the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) has also played an important role in promoting and encouraging the use and maintenance of standards for the improvement of goods and services produced or used in Trinidad and Tobago. An ASQ Sustaining Member since 1996, the TTBS Information Centre utilizes a number of ASQ publications in the discharge of its duties. A collection of ASQ professional journals and books from the Quality Press Collection are housed in the Information Center. Sponsored by TTBS, the National Quality Forum, an event dedicated to the promotion of quality throughout the nation, was held in 1996 and 1998.

Victor and Associates Ltd. is also an established agency that provides support and learning opportunities to quality professionals and organizations in the country. Victor and Associates Ltd. is under the direction of Sean Victor, ASQ Senior member and winner of the 1998-99 ASQ Regional Booster Award. Sean Victor has recruited more than 47 members from Trinidad and Tobago since 1996. His contributions and dedication to spreading the word about ASQ has made the Society stronger.

The quality tools and methodologies used most frequently in Trinidad and Tobago are: statistical quality control; statistical process control charts; pareto charts; acceptance sampling Mil 105 and Mil 404; ISO 9000 quality management system models; and ISO 14001 environmental management systems. These tools are used by individuals and organizations alike.

As the economy evolves and new sectors such as education, health care, and energy embrace quality, ISO 9000 and 14000 will be more widely utilized and new local quality programs and initiatives will be developed. More individuals and organizations in Trinidad and Tobago will experience firsthand the benefits of quality and begin to incorporate its principles on a daily basis.

Special thanks to Mr. Sean Victor of Victor and Associates Ltd., to Ms. Devitra Dash of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), and to the National Quality Council (NQC) for contributing to this article.

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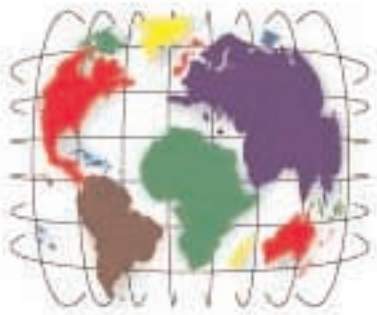
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Meet ASQ's Country Councilor in the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Sunil Thawani

How did you become aware of ASQ?

I was enjoying my job as marketing manager with India's largest steel company, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). With the winds of "Perestroika" and "Glasnost" blowing from the USSR, the Indian government also initiated major reforms and liberalized and decontrolled the steel industry in India. As part of the change process, in 1989, top management of SAIL decided to adopt TQM as a fundamental business strategy. In 1991, I, along with 45 other managers, was selected to undergo six months of vigorous and extensive training in TQM in the United States and India. My career took a turn to Quality.

While in the United States we visited Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winners like IBM, Corning, and Xerox. During an address by Mr. David Luther of Corning Glass, I learned about the American Society for Quality Control (ASQC).

Having been bitten by the quality bug, in 1993, I decided to learn more about TQM and joined TQM International Pvt. Limited (TQMI). I got to know more about the services of ASQC from Mr. Janak Mehta, visionary managing director of TQMI. He was a Senior member of ASQC and had been a regular participant in ASQ annual conferences. This provided me an opportunity to learn more about ASQ services and publications like *Quality Progress*, ASQ conference proceedings, etc.

In 1996 I became a member of ASQ.

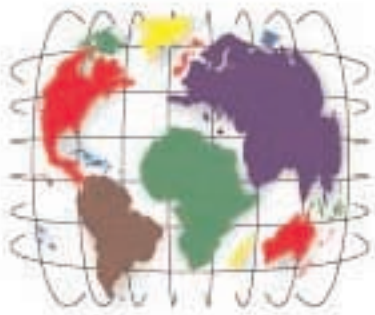
Why did you decide to become a country councilor?

In 1997, when I came to work for the Dubai Ports Authority in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, as quality controller, I wanted to network with other quality professionals and used to attend Dubai Quality Group meetings. Among the seven Emirates of UAE, Dubai was leading in the quality front. What surprised me was that ASQ, being the world's leading and well-known society of quality professionals, was practically unheard of in Dubai, let alone other Emirates.

I felt a great need and desire to tell quality professionals about ASQ and its services. I felt it was my obligation toward my profession to share ASQ's services, considering it was such a rich resource of information and knowledge about quality management, and at very reasonable fees also. Since there was a growing awareness about quality in UAE, I could find an "implied need" among quality professionals and practicing managers for ASQ.

In 1998, in one of the communications from Mr. Navin Dedhia, chair of ASQ's International Chapter, I learned about ASQ's country councilors program. I immediately contacted him to ask about the role and responsibilities of country councilors and if there was already one nominated for UAE. He immediately sent me details and also informed me that there was no country councilor for ASQ in UAE. I offered to provide my services. Mr. Dedhia in his letter dated February 9, 1998, informed me about my "appointment" as country councilor for UAE.

This provided me the necessary "mechanism" to address the needs of quality professionals and practicing managers and creating awareness about ASQ in UAE.



What have been the successes and challenges you have encountered since you became a councilor?

As a logical first step, I asked for the list of ASQ members in UAE. We had about 20 members.

One of the earliest challenges was to get ASQ members in UAE together, establish a network, and ensure its continuity. I started by verifying contact numbers; some members had moved on to new jobs and locations, and so on. It took some time and eventually I succeeded in contacting almost all. Many agreed to meet. The second issue was to select the venue for a meeting. The best option was to conduct it in the offices of the organization where ASQ members were working. Mr. Khalil Hassan, ASQ member and vice president, Mashreq Bank, Dubai, happily agreed to host the first meeting. Others, like Mr. Shabbir Dattu from EPPCO, D. Hurley from Pepsi International, and Ashraf Sherbiny from Germanischer Lloyds, also offered to host the meeting.

We had our first meeting in February 1999, in the Mashreq Bank office, Dubai, which was attended by nine ASQ members. Holding the meeting in Mashreq Bank, which was the winner of the Dubai Quality Award, was befitting for ASQ to take its first significant step.

We decided to meet on a regular basis and agreed that in each meeting one of us will share his/her experience on a topic of common interest or a best practice. We collected a list of topics. This was our first major step in establishing an ASQ network and awareness in UAE.

To increase ASQ awareness in the region, one of the strategies adopted from the very beginning was that members were free to invite their colleagues and friends. At times spouses have also attended our ASQ meetings. Now at every meeting we have five to 10 invitees. This has helped us to increase awareness about ASQ and its services and enlarge our “network” of quality professionals. This I believe is one of the factors that has increased attendance in our meetings and ASQ membership by about 70% in two years.

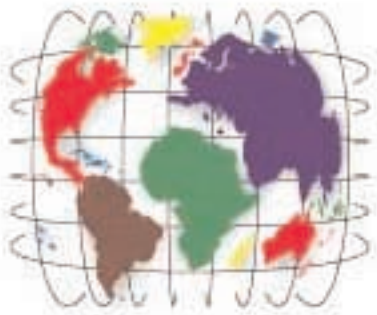
As with any professional society, one of the challenges is to maintain the continued interest of members in activities organized at the local level. Regular meetings/networking should continue to provide value to members and be in line with the mission of ASQ.

Another area we need to focus on is to increase awareness of ASQ in other Emirates/cities like Sharjah, Al Ain, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, etc., where the quality movement is yet to gain momentum.

With the increased use of information technology in routine work, e-commerce, etc., I would like to see some IT professionals also become members of ASQ. With this, the two important professions of quality and IT can get to understand each other better. This would be of mutual benefit in the larger context of enhancing the overall competitiveness of business.

Some members have expressed a desire to have social get-together sessions so as to understand each other better at the personal and professional levels.

Since our humble beginnings in 1999, we meet four to five times a year. Recently, we had the opportunity of having some of very learned quality professionals address us including Dr. Manu Vora, vice president, ASQ; Mr. Janak Mehta, managing direc-



tor, TQMI; and Dr. Hans Bajaria, winner of various ASQ medals and prizes, as well as the Deming Prize, and president of Multiface Inc., USA.

In the year 2000, I was surprised and honored with a Testimonial Award by ASQ. It has been a motivating factor for me. All of this has been possible thanks to the commitment, support, and cooperation of ASQ members in UAE.

I am confident that ASQ has taken firm “root” in UAE, and with the continuing commitment of ASQ members, tremendous support from Mr. Navin Dedhia, and the staff at ASQ headquarters, memberships and activities of ASQ will only grow further in UAE.

Sunil Thawani, <mailto:thawani@emirates.net.ae>

Attention Members in Trinidad and Tobago: **Share Your Commitment to Quality, Become a Country Councilor**

If you are searching for leadership experience and opportunities to share your commitment to quality, and to meet people you wouldn't normally encounter, consider becoming an ASQ country councilor.

The International Chapter is currently seeking a member in Trinidad and Tobago who would be willing to volunteer her/his time, experience, and knowledge of ASQ membership benefits with other international members. Please e-mail ASQ Membership Services at <mailto:lzysko@asq.org> if you're interested in becoming an ASQ country councilor for Trinidad and Tobago.

Doing Business Internationally...

A study by *Fortune* magazine and the accounting/management firm of Arthur Andersen ranked the top cities for business in Latin America. Here are the top five:

1. Buenos Aires, Argentina
2. San Juan, Puerto Rico
3. Mexico City, Mexico
4. Sao Paulo, Brazil
5. Santiago, Chile

The top criteria Latin American executives named as factors in their ranking, in order of importance: Pro-business attitudes; local availability of professionals; government regulations; entrepreneurial activity; technology/telecom infrastructure; corporate taxes; colleges and universities; attracting professionals from other countries; attracting professionals from inside the country; research/innovation activities.

Source: Fortune, Arthur Andersen



ASQ News

ASQ Certification Exams, International Locations

The application deadline for CQE, CQA, CSQE, and CQIA exams is April 6, 2001.

All international members are encouraged to apply for future exams. We make every effort to accommodate international members from any country. Please contact Betty File at <mailto:bfile@asq.org> if you have questions about exam dates or international locations.

Reminder of 2001 Certification Exam Dates

	Exam Dates	Application Deadline
CQE/CQA/CSQE/CQIA	June 2	April 6
CQT/CRE/CMI/HACCP Certified Quality Manager	October 20	August 24
CQE/CQA/CSQE/CQIA	December 1	October 5

International Members are invited to the 55th Annual Quality Congress

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, May 7-9, 2001

Directions for registration and hotel information can be found on the AQC web site, <http://aqc.asq.org>. All international members are invited to attend the International Chapter Meeting on Monday, May 7, from 5:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m. Food and beverages will be served.

Exciting International Topic Sessions:

Implementation of a Regional Quality Program—A Case Study From Brazil

Monday, May 7, 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

“Qualidade RS/PGQP” is driven by the whole state of Rio Grande do Sul—industry, commerce, services, universities, hospitals, workers, customers—in other words, the whole community. It is an action guided by a 10-year strategic plan based on voluntary work, supported by a minimum professional structure able to facilitate the implementation of the action plans to achieve the short-and-long term objectives of the “Quality Movement.” PGQP’s present enrollment is 4,900 organizations employing 885,000 people, and it is the largest quality movement in Brazil.

Quality Improvement Challenge in the New Age Global Economy

Tuesday, May 8, 10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Don’t miss this panel discussion featuring members of the International Academy for Quality (IAQ). This group of respected panelists will focus their attention on the new global economy and the evolving challenge for quality improvement.



Quality Awareness in Developing Countries

Wednesday, May 9, 9:15 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Quality awareness has been increasing all around the world—heightened as a result of several factors, including global competition, ISO standards requirements, national quality awards, and remarkable efforts by local quality societies. This session will feature quality awareness activities in Venezuela, Brazil, and India.

Application of Quality Tools Outside of North America

Wednesday, May 9, 11:15 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

In order to compete economically with superb quality, industries are using different quality tools to gain a competitive advantage. Explore unique perspectives on the application of benchmarking, TQM, and ISO 9000 as presented by authors from the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Japan.

Performance Excellence Through Quality Management

Wednesday, May 9, 11:15 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

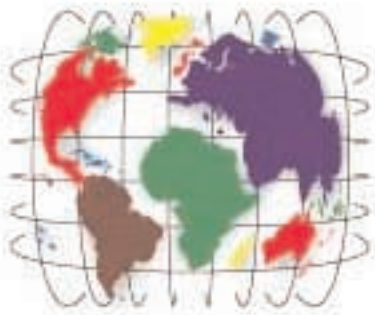
Don't miss this great opportunity to learn from two applications with proven results. First, learn about a regional quality award practice geared toward small business excellence. Second, you will observe the results of a case study featuring a customer survey process that has driven enterprisewide improvements leading to customer loyalty and improved bottom line.

\$5,000 International Scholarship Opportunity

Applications for ASQ's Richard A. Freund International Scholarship, which is awarded every June to one or more graduate students, are due April 1, 2001. The scholarship honors the memory of Freund, who served as president of ASQ in 1972-73. Scholarship criteria are as follows:

- Study may be within any country.
- Applicants do not need to be ASQ members.
- Applicants should have a GPA of 3.25 or higher (undergraduate and graduate).
- Concentration must be in quality control, quality assurance, quality improvement, total quality management, or a similar quality emphasis.

If you or someone you know is enrolled or planning to enroll in a master's or higher degree program, and would like to apply, visit <http://www.asq.org/about/scholar.html> or e-mail <mailto:cs@asq.org> and request application item B0499.



Contact Your Country Councilor

Your membership gives you access to international country councilors. If you haven't been in touch with one, use the following e-mail addresses to contact one in your region. These country councilors are a contact point for members in their country, and help members by fostering communications, and providing services and member benefit information.

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