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Layered Process Audits Drive a Culture of Excellence

The majority of my company's consulting practice is working in the automotive industry. My team and I are called upon to help clients with process improvement, mostly to help get things right at the time of product launch, reduce the quantity of nonconforming parts, or improve productivity. I often tell people that quality is actually very easy—it's the people part that's difficult.

What's hard is the fact that building and sustaining a quality management system or business operating system rubs against human nature. People don't always like to learn or follow a prescribed path, and people often have good reasons to want to take short cuts. But when the process isn't followed, the outcome will not hit the desired mark as often as when it is followed. So periodic audits and frequent process verifications are important.

LPAs look at Process Conformance

I had the great fortune about 20 years ago to work with and learn from some very smart people at General Motors. They were developing a quality tool they called layered process audits (LPAs). LPAs were to be standard leader work for the plant leadership teams to verify key elements in high-risk processes. Different than quality system audits, LPAs were to be completed daily on each shift—not on everything, but on the most critical process steps. If the process is completed correctly, it's more likely the outputs will meet spec and avoid costs of nonconforming product.

The automotive industry maintains the expectation for zero defects—not only in words, but also by repercussions when a supplier's defective parts are received by a customer. If the customer is a vehicle assembly plant, consequences of a defective part could be: expediting a replacement shipment, paying for third-party inspection and sorting, costs related to an assembly plant's yard-hold, or worst case could be a product recall or regulatory consequences.

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About the Author

Murray Sittsamer joined ASQ in 1992 after presenting an overview of ISO 9000 to the Ann Arbor section (section 1010). The company he worked for at the time was one of the first companies in the United States to be registered to the standard. Sittsamer is now a Senior ASQ member and active presenter and writer on topics such as FMEA, problem solving, and LPA. As president of The Luminous Group, he directs a brilliant team of consultants who work with automotive and mid-size manufacturing companies to illuminate excellence. www.LuminousGroup.com.

These high costs of errors evolved into robust strategies to prevent problems. While failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA) has long been used in automotive, it helps anticipate what could go wrong and establishes process controls. It doesn't verify that the necessary process controls are in place and effective on any given day.

Most companies establish methods and standards, and provide training, but then only assume they are being followed. Because of human nature's frailty in following guidelines over the long run, something needs to be in place to check, verify, or audit that the procedure is being followed on a regular basis. LPAs are a proactive way to find any deviation, rather than waiting to find issues appear as scrap, rework, or customer complaints. There might be common questions about safety, but each work cell would have an LPA checklist specific to the work elements of that work cell or line.

LPAs Increase Employee Engagement

LPAs are also different than quality system audits because they should be owned and conducted by the operations function. The idea is not to look for mistakes, but to verify that work is conducted per the standard. That positive perspective is a key differentiating factor. Since it is a supervisor's job to help his or her team get things right, it makes sense for each supervisor to verify that team members are following key process requirements, every shift, every day. And how does a senior

manager know his or her superiors are checking that team members are following protocols? Because managers are checking the same key work elements called out in the LPA checklist, though their checks are done less frequently, maybe only two or three times per week.

Companies also should have other departments conduct these same verifications, such as human resources, finance, shipping, etc. Involving everyone in LPAs makes quality part of each person's job description. By having everyone own quality, leadership can drive a culture of quality.

Like with any other audit, the way the auditor interacts with employees is very important. LPA auditors should make eye contact to show sincerity and genuine interest. In LPA, you want to acknowledge that people are following standards, and reinforce why that's important to the department and to the company. Auditors should acknowledge to the employees when processes are running according to plan, and look and listen for ideas to improve the process even more.

When an LPA auditor finds a nonconformance to requirements, it's important to record the issues and trigger a corrective action. Because the LPA checklist has only the most critical work elements, leaving an error uncorrected would transmit the message that process standards are not that important. On the other hand, swift correction of any problem (e.g., getting preventive maintenance tasks completed, locating the correct labels, removing any

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hazards from the workplace, etc.) broadcasts the message that excellence is important and that management is committed to helping all employees do their best work.

Will employees want to be audited? Yes, they definitely will. When LPAs are viewed as an enabling strategy to help all employees achieve excellence, it takes LPA out of the realm of being another quality audit merely to “check the box.” Instead, when managers are very responsive to process problems found and embrace employee suggestions, people will actually want to be audited. Employees should trust that if there’s a problem, management will get to the bottom of it and not blame the operators.

LPAs make a culture of excellence visible on the plant floor. When auditors have a respected, high-impact role, they won’t want to skip their scheduled audits.

LPAs done well are more than a way to increase conformity to requirements. They are a way to eliminate the cumulative costs of scrap, rework, and customer complaints, which when left unchecked, take away from desirable investments and profits. The greatest benefits occur when an organization consistently checks work standards and shows respect for employees’ efforts. When that happens, leadership is reinforcing that those standards are important, which brings about palpable momentum for achieving excellence.

Letter from the Auditor

Ola Okikiolu

I presume everyone around the United States is now experiencing the cold weather.

In this issue we’ll be learning or refreshing our memories on layered process audits (LPAs) with emphasis on the automotive industry.

The News Bytes section has information about our 2019 Conference, which you will not want to miss. Please prepare ahead and get involved; volunteers are needed for the conference.

As we get ready for the festive period, let us be thankful for all our accomplishments and especially for life, good health, and our loved ones. Let us not forget to share the “goodies,” especially with the less privileged.

We are looking forward to a better and more fulfilled year in 2019.

It’s my pleasure to put together this edition of the newsletter (which happens to be my first).

Thank you for your readership.

Cheers and stay warm,

Ola Okikiolu

Editor

ASQ Audit Division Newsletter



Division Vision

To be the pre-eminent body for providing expertise on auditing and defining expectations for the audit profession.

Division Mission

To develop the expectations of the audit profession and auditors. To promote to stakeholders auditing as a management tool to achieve continuous improvement and to increase customer satisfaction.

The Audit Report is published four times a year as a chief information resource for members and friends of ASQ's Audit Division.

Information about the ASQ Audit Division may also be found at asq.org/audit.

Reminder: All ASQ Audit Division endorsed communication and/or use of the Audit Division's logo must be approved by the Audit Division chair.

Message From the Chair

BJ Johnson

Hello all Audit Division members!

I have great news to present in this newsletter—the dates for the 2019 Audit Division Conference have been set for October 17-18, 2019. The conference will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel at the Entrance Universal Orlando. The hotel property is surrounded by Orlando's main sites, including SeaWorld, Walt Disney World, and Discovery Cove and is just a short walk to Universal City Walk and the entrance to Universal Studios Orlando. Guests at the hotel can enjoy the hotel's free shuttle service to many of these locations. We are excited about this location and have been working hard to get good hotel rates for this conference. We hope to see you all there.

As we work on planning for this conference, if you are interested in volunteering, please contact myself, Vicky Geltinger, or John Mascaro. We will need plenty of help to ensure our conference is as good as it has been in years past. We will also be asking for speakers—remember speaking will help with those recertification CEUs we are all looking for. If you are interested in being a sponsor for the event, please contact us and we will work with you.

We look forward to seeing you all at the next WCQI in Fort Worth, Texas. Stop by our booth to learn more about our Audit Division Conference or just learn more about what the Division is trying to do for our members. As always, we will also have giveaway items, so stop by to pick up some fun items or maybe a free Audit Division Conference registration.

Hope to see you all soon,

BJ Johnson
Audit Division Chair

Newsletter Publishing Guidelines

Authors Wanted!

The *Audit Report* staff is looking for authors. Share your expertise with other audit professionals while adding to your own credentials. Writing for the newsletter also earns CEUs to submit with your certification journal. If interested, please email submittals to lance@fullmoonconsulting.net. Guidelines are below.

Main Factors

1. Technical Merit
 - ▶ Includes correct facts
 - ▶ Relevant to our mission
2. No selling of services
3. Nothing offensive
4. Original content only. Nothing previously published or presented, without prior approval by review committee.

Additional Factors

5. Not too similar to something recently done
6. Desired subject matter: How timely is material?
7. Well written (not requiring extensive editing)
8. Needed length

Categories

Newsletter submittals should fit into one of the following categories:

- Tips From the Trenches – tools, tips, and techniques for auditors
- Faces in Auditing – new, up-and-coming professionals of note in the field of auditing
- Articles, case studies, or book reviews
- News Bytes – event coverage, announcements, and other audit profession-related news

Length

Desired length for tips, book reviews, articles, and case studies is 400 to 800 words. Tips and book reviews should be in the 400- to 600-word range, articles should be anywhere from 400 to 800 words, and case studies should be 500-plus words. If a submittal goes beyond 800 words, then we may look at breaking it into more than one part.

Review and Selection Process

All submitted works will be reviewed by at least two members of the review committee, which consists of the newsletter editor and four other members. The subject for a book review should be approved in advance by either two members of the review committee or by the newsletter editor. The newsletter editor will determine when accepted articles will be published. Submittal of an article does not guarantee publication.

Other

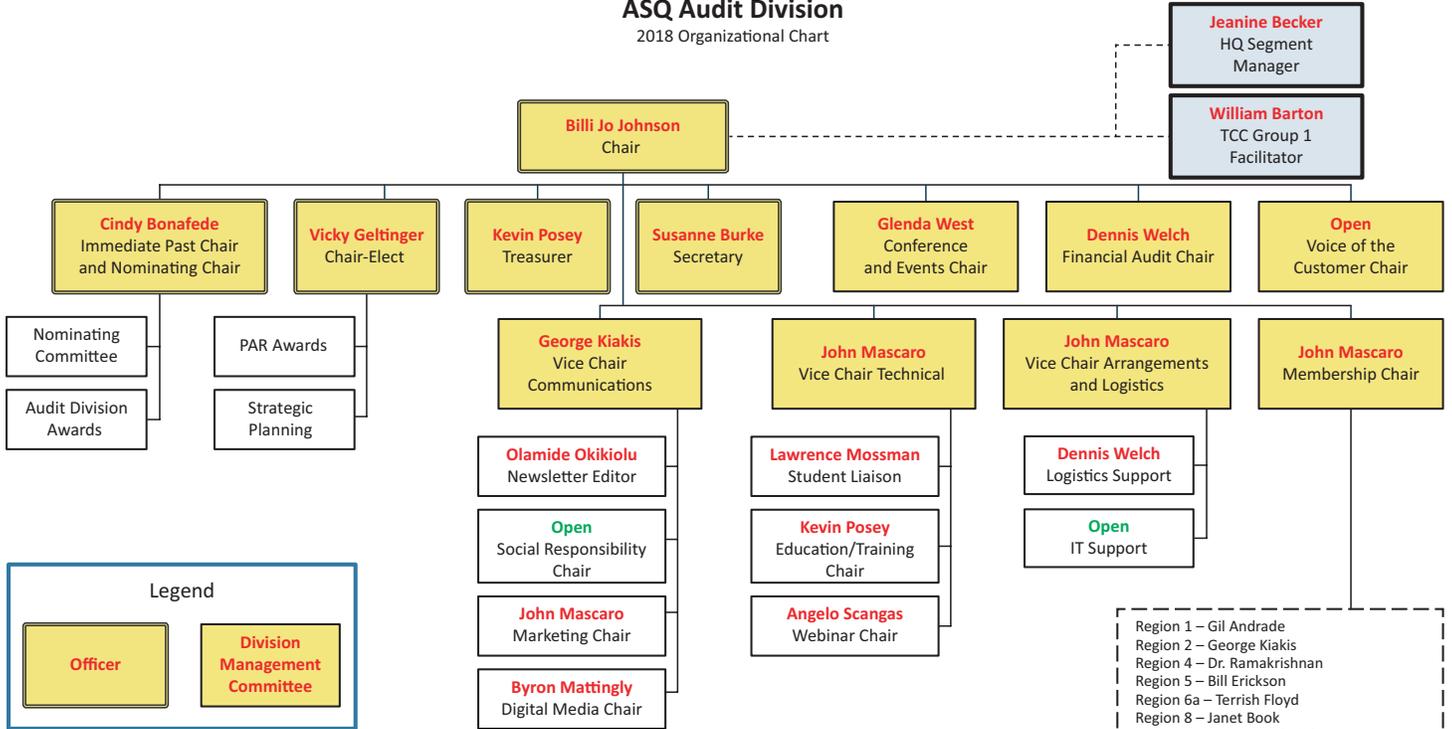
All articles containing photos should be submitted with the photo(s) as a separate jpeg attachment.

Calendar/Main Theme(s)

Submittals relating to the main theme and from division members receive priority.

ISSUE	SUBMITTAL DEADLINE	ISSUE'S MAIN THEMES
March 1	January 15	Preview of ASQ World Conference on Quality and Improvement and open topics
June 1	April 15	Recap of ASQ's WCQI and open topics
September 1	July 15	Training, certification, back-to-school, and Audit Conference
December 15	October 31	Conference recap, year-end reflection, and looking ahead to next year

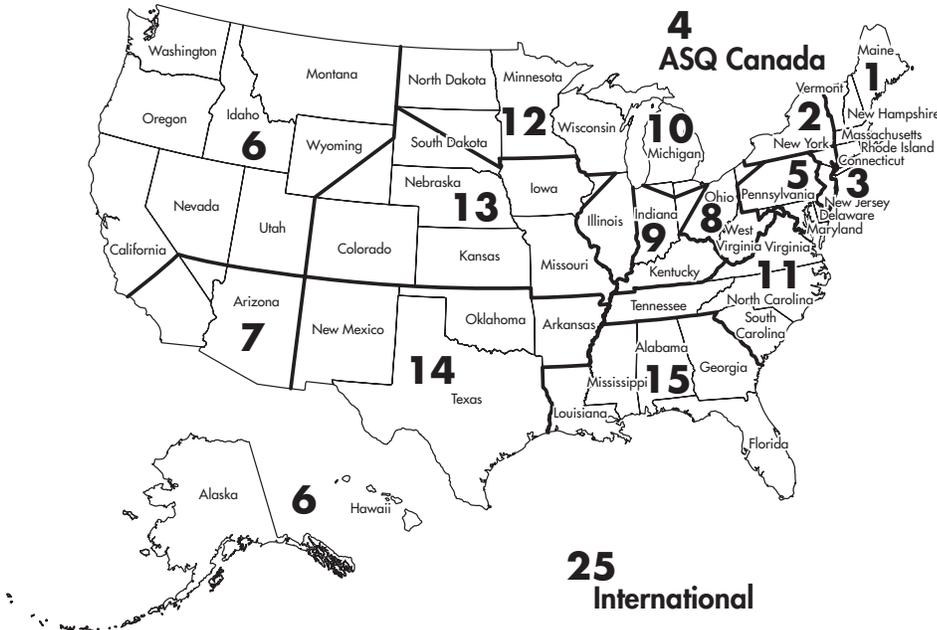
ASQ Audit Division
2018 Organizational Chart



- Region 1 – Gil Andrade
- Region 2 – George Kiakis
- Region 4 – Dr. Ramakrishnan
- Region 5 – Bill Erickson
- Region 6a – Terrish Floyd
- Region 8 – Janet Book
- Region 8 – Larry Litke (DRC)
- Region 9 – Michelle Henderson
- Region 9 – BJ Johnson (DRC)
- Region 9 – Rajesh Sharma (DRC)
- Region 10 – Gregory Stewart
- Region 11a – David Wu
- Region 11b – Sheronda Jeffries
- Region 13 – Lawrence Mossman
- Region 13 – Michelle Wolf (DRC)
- Region 13 – Kathy Maize (DRC)
- Region 14a – Glenda West
- Region 14a – Gloria French (DRC)
- Region 14b – Kristin Case
- Region 15a – Joann Hooper (DRC)
- Region 15a – Jerry Guttridge (DRC)
- Region 15a – Gwendolyn Bodry (DRC)
- Europe – Julio Gonzalez Silva
- East Asia – Mila Cabuloy
- Jamaica - Jacqueline Scott- Brown
- Newfoundland - Karen Knofall
- Saudi Arabia – Afaq Ahmed

July 2018

ASQ Region Map



Advertising rates:
 Full page: \$500 U.S. per issue
 Half page: \$250 U.S. per issue
 Quarter page: \$125 U.S. per issue

For submissions or questions, contact Lance Coleman, lance@fullmoonconsulting.net.





In the Next Issue:

Message From the Chair

Letter From the Editor

Feature Article: TBD

Tips From the Trenches: TBD

Article 1: TBD

Division News Bytes

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