

*Government Division Newsletter*  
*Message From the Chair*

*Quality Takes Root in Government*

Having spent approximately a decade assisting departments and agencies to design and implement service delivery improvements I have begun to notice that the concepts and tools of quality originally introduced in the 1990s are beginning to take root and grow. While clearly this is still the exception rather than the rule (as pointed out in Professor John Maleyeff's article "*Process Improvement in the Public Sector*"), there is evidence that an increasing number of government organizations and agencies are becoming much more sophisticated and mature in their application of tools and practices derived through quality. Driving this forward, quite simply, are results. Ambitious and/or dedicated political and administrative leaders including mayors, governors, premiers, and ministers are recognizing that can they deliver to voters concrete service improvements attuned to political goals while achieving a significant return on investment.

Examples abound; Mayor Bloomberg of New York and Governor Martin O'Malley of Maryland can each point to the success of their [311](#) service transformations as evidence of their personal ability to simultaneously meet the needs of citizens and taxpayers. In Canada, Australia, and Europe the public sector is being rapidly transformed by the introduction of [Single Window Service Delivery](#) organizations such as [Service Canada](#), [ServiceOntario](#), and Australia's [Centrelink](#). These organizations are organized to serve as the retail arm of government. Just as Wal-Mart has grown into a global giant by excelling in process and information management, so too have these organizations. So much so that ServiceOntario is now able to offer the world's first "money back" service guarantees for [birth certificates](#) and business registrations. These organizations are now recruiting senior managers with professional quality training and experience to lead and accelerate the adoption of lean and Six Sigma principles. Organizations such as the state of Iowa have established formal programs (e.g., [Office of Lean Enterprise](#)) sponsored by the governor to lead and promote adoption of lean quality principles. Other notable examples (described in the article by Craig Anderson, *Public Sector Baldrige Award Winners: The New Frontier for Performance Excellence*) are the first ever **not-for-profit** [Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award](#) winners; [The City of Coral Springs, FL](#), and [ARDEC in New Jersey](#). Finally, I would point to the well-recognized global leadership of the Florida Department of Revenue, which serves as a benchmark for government and private sector alike for its adoption of organization-wide process thinking. Michael Hammer, in his April 2007 [HBR Article "The Process Audit"](#) argues that to successfully transform themselves, organizations must learn to think and act in terms of organization-wide process management. Further, Hammer argues that leaders must come to recognize that this competency takes time and effort—a lesson Florida executive and Government Division member Dale Weeks will deliver to participants in the [Lean Six Sigma in Government Leadership Dialogue](#) in Houston, May 8. ([Register Now.](#))

As chair of the Government Division, it is my view that the division is well-suited and well-positioned to play an important role in promoting awareness and understanding of these exciting developments among our members. Specifically we have organized the one-day workshop in Houston, May 8, to discuss the application of "[Lean Six Sigma in Government](#)". This event features many leading practitioners and will be a great opportunity to mix and mingle with your Government Division colleagues. [Please join us in Houston and Register Now.](#)

In addition, you are invited to attend the unveiling of the Government Division's new online training webinar, "*Lean Thinking for Government - An Introduction*" at the [World Conference on Quality Improvement in Houston May 5-7](#). If you are not able to attend the World Conference, look for an announcement in early May.

By undertaking these and other activities such as online webinars, newsletters, discussion boards, and conferences, it is hoped the division can provide you with both relevant information and also access to something far more valuable—a network of veteran, experienced quality practitioners from around the

world. Colleagues who can plug you in to a vast array of other networks that can help and support you in achieving your organization's goals.

Guy Gordon