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New QM&T Product - Communication and Project Management book

This book has been developed to support the Institute of Quality Assurance diploma course D4. The book is in five sections. The first two sections are intended to enhance the student's ability to become a more effective communicator by developing the transferable skills of communication and presentation. Sections three and four introduce the student to the techniques and applications of project management including work breakdown structure and networking. The final section explores the use of quality management processes in project management and the role of key standards. This book is available from QM&T www.qmt.co.uk.

Microsoft Data Protection

Microsoft Limited's entry in the Data Protection Register expired on 8th January 2003. This means that the company, under UK law, is illegally holding personal data and in theory, the Data Protection Commissioner could prosecute Microsoft. All Microsoft had to do was renew its registration, but now it has to submit an entirely new application. For more information please visit www.ntk.net

High salt levels in children's food

It has been reported that an independent group, which monitors the quality of food, is questioning manufacturers on their claims to have reduced levels of salt in their food products. According to the Food Commission, the salt content of crisps has nearly doubled over the past 25 years, and some other food products, aimed at children, contain more salt in a single portion, than the daily

recommended intake. The commission examined the levels of salt in crisps, white bread, canned baked beans and tinned tomato soup and compared them with the same products from 1978. The survey was published in the Food Magazine, which found the salt amount in crisps had almost doubled, salt levels in baked beans had also increased, but salt levels in white bread and tinned tomato soup had fallen slightly. Eating high levels of salt has been linked to high blood pressure, which is the main cause of heart attacks and strokes. The commission also criticised the Football Association for promoting junk foods and sugary drinks to children. For more information please see BBC news.

ISO9001: 2000 Transition

A recent study carried out by a well known and respected ISO9001 certification body has shown that approximately 70% of their clients have still not completed or not even started their ISO9001: 2000 transition. This is particularly concerning, especially when considering that the old ISO9001: 1994 standard will be discontinued in December this year (2003). Some Certification Bodies concerned at the potential loss of revenue have been offering consultancy services to bring their clients inline with the new standard. This blurs still further the role and distinction between the certification body independence and QA consultants support and guidance.

Further information on ISO9001:2000 transition including training and support is available from QMT - e-mail (help@qmt.co.uk) or call 01483 453512.



Quality Human Resource policy = Higher revenue per employee

The global Human Capital Survey report issued last month found that organisations with a written HR strategy generated 35 per cent higher revenues per employee than those without one. The automotive industry was one of the business sectors surveyed. The HR director for Vauxhall believes that quality H.R. is about intervention and support for the business strategy. The research carried out by Pricewaterhouse Coopers surveyed 1,000 organisations over a range of 37 business sectors worldwide. The research concluded that effective people management adds value to organisations. Benefits include lower absenteeism and more effective performance management.

Dissatisfied Customers force Woolwich Chief Executive to resign.

According to the Sunday Times, the Woolwich Bank's chief executive Lynne Peacock who 'was ultimately responsible for bringing misery to hundreds of customers with sustained errors and systematic problems with some of Woolwich's products' parted company with the Bank due to Customer Dissatisfaction. After receiving complaints from its readers the paper's Rupert Steiner pursued the Woolwich with examples of customer complaints week after week. Four hundred complaints were received in all. Examples of complaints included a terminally ill customer who had negotiated a reduced mortgage rate until he died but was told that he had lived too long and a long standing customer who had never had a Woolwich mortgage but was threatened with legal action for non payment of his 'mortgage'. The paper championed their readers' causes and in November of last year Lynne Peacock promised a range of measures to improve the service for Woolwich customers. Her decision to part company with the Woolwich was announced in early January. The Bank denied that recent complaints had any bearing on Peacock's decision to give up her position. For more information please see Sunday Times Business January 5th 2003.

Keeping your Customers satisfied? Satisfaction Measurement answers the question.

Figures recently released by ACSI the American Customer Satisfaction Index revealed that Colgate-Palmolive's customer satisfaction has dropped by 6% in the last

quarter and the corporation now lags behind its competitors. It is important for Colgate-Palmolive to pin point why customers are becoming dissatisfied so that appropriate action can be taken. Once the reasons for the deterioration are known then Colgate-Palmolive is equipped to make the required decisions.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys can be used to try and understand customers' ever-changing perceptions and experiences of a product range. The ACSI survey analysis points out that in this case, to price sensitivity and product quality were important measures.

ITEM Software

Item Software, the world's leading suppliers of Reliability, Availability and Safety analysis software, recently announced a free upgrade to the latest version of ITEM Toolkit for all existing customers. This decision was taken as a way of thanking customers for their support and loyalty over the past few years. The latest ITEM Toolkit version (5.24) uses state of the art Windows development techniques to implement new program features, helping reliability and quality engineers to be more effective. For more information on ITEM Software, visit their web site at www.itemuk.com

PS9000: 2001 Pharmaceutical Packaging Material

Firstan Limited have received their certification of ISO 9001:2000 and the requirements of PS 9000:2001 Pharmaceutical Packaging Materials. PS 9000 - Pharmaceutical packaging materials has been developed as a revision of the IQA/PQG Pharmaceutical Supplier CoP for Pharmaceutical Suppliers - The Manufacture of Printed materials for use in the Packaging and Labelling of Medicinal Products (P00021 Issue 2) and the Manufacture of Medicinal Product Contact Packaging Materials (P00022 Issue 2) based on the ISO 9000:2000 series of standards. PS 9000 - Pharmaceutical packaging materials is a standard developed for the supply of packaging materials to the pharmaceutical industry. It includes the requirements of ISO 9001:2000 and the guidance of ISO 9004:2000. For more information please visit www.firstan.co.uk

Cow clones

According to a recent report, scientists in New Zealand have created the world's first cow

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clones that produce special milk that can increase the speed and ease of cheese making. The scientists hope that this breakthrough will transform the cheese industry, and the techniques could also be used to “tailor” milk for human consumption. Opponents of GM foods continue to doubt whether these kinds of products would really be safe. For more information please see BBC news.

Nanotechnology centre

A new centre for Nanotechnology, which is the science of miniature technology, is due to open in 2004 in Gordon Street, London. It is a joint venture between University College London and Imperial College and will enable British scientists to be at the forefront of this new technology. The main object of nanotechnology is to accurately control the physical properties of materials with single molecule precision. Approximately 100 people would be employed. For more information, please see BBC news.

Spam of 2002

According to a recent report, 2002 was a bumper year for unsolicited e-mails, known as “spam”. It is thought that nearly 30% of mail sent through the Internet is spam. Any one who has an e-mail account will have received this unsolicited material that offers things we do not need or want from companies we have never asked to receive information from. A filtering firm estimates that spam costs businesses around the world, about \$9billion a year to deal with. This estimate includes the time it takes to delete the messages, the cost of buying larger mail servers and storage systems to deal with in-boxes filled with the messages and the cost of having staff to unclog networks that have been overloaded by spam. The worst of it is that there is no sign of an end to this unsolicited mail. For more information please see BBC news.

Food additives

It has been reported that the European Union has restricted the levels of a food additive given to salmon and poultry because of the risk to eye damage. The chemical, canthaxanthin, is added to the feed to make salmon appear more reddish in colour, and chicken skin and egg yolks to appear more yellow. Research has suggested that a build up of the pigments can damage the retina. According to the officials, the restrictions will not have any impact on the quality of farmed salmon or supermarket eggs. For more information please see BBC news.

2003 Baldrige criteria

The new 2003 Baldrige Criteria For Business Excellence has been placed on The Benchmarking Exchange (a.k.a. BenchNet) for public access. You can use this application to obtain a report card on how your department, division or entire organisation measures up using the 2003 Baldrige Criteria. The report will also show your score compared with others in your industry and across all industries combined. Some organisations also use this application to compare like departments within their own organisation, anywhere in the world. By comparing report cards for each department organisations can learn from each other, and see which departments need assistance in certain processes and which department to learn more from (this is what benchmarking is all about!).

Anyone can access TBE's Online Baldrige 2003 Self-Assessment. Please visit: http://66.124.245.170/TBE_Members2/selfassessment/baldrige03/index.htm and select “Generate Profile”. After you complete the online form you will receive an email containing a link to your report card.