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The Gurus

To continue with the theme of Quality Gurus, this month we will introduce Joseph Juran who is well known and respected worldwide. It is up to you to decide whether his views are appropriate to your organization.

Joseph M. Juran

Juran worked for the Bell Telephone Company and after the Second World War he became an independent teacher. He was the author of the Quality Control Handbook, first published in 1951. His approach can be broken down into two sections; breakthrough and control. To achieve this a determined and coordinated effort is required to make improvements so that the old standard level of performance becomes obsolete and the new improved level of performance is the norm. The difference between the old level of performance and the new level is known as the "chronic waste or disease" which must be diagnosed and cured. Having achieved the *breakthrough* in performance then it is necessary to *control* at the new quality performance level. Juran's approach is outlined below:

Stage 1 - Breakthrough in Attitude

Provide a favourable climate for embarking on the introduction of company-wide quality planning.

Stage 2 - Pareto

Identifying the priorities by concentrating on the vital few and ignoring the trivial many.

Stage 3 - Organisation

Coordinating the project work, studying and analysing the problem by:

- a. Breakthrough in knowledge (steering and diagnostic)
- b. Breakthrough in culture (overcoming resistance to change)
- c. Breakthrough in performance (to the new standard level in performance)

Stage 4 - Control at the new standard level of performance

Stage 5 - Repeat the above stages

Having achieved the breakthrough to the new quality standard, the process needs to be repeated continuing the cycle of improvements to new even greater heights in quality performance.

Digital cameras

According to a recent report, digital cameras are becoming very popular, but this may cause disastrous results for future generations. Family photos, in the past, were put away in the attic and forgotten about. Years later they were found as priceless personal or even public records. However, very few pictures taken with digital cameras are ever printed. Most are stored electronically to be viewed on a computer screen. They will be collections of ones and zeros on various types of electronic storage media. The problem will be that due to the technology evolving so fast, any storage medium used today will become obsolete very soon and finding the right equipment to retrieve these digital images which were stored previously on obsolete media will become almost impossible. For example, the Doomsday Project, a registry of British life in 1986 created as a digital counterpart to the original Doomsday Book put together by monks in 1086, was stored on laser discs. The equipment needed to see the images on the laser discs is already very rare, and yet the Doomsday Book that was written on sheets of paper, is still readily available after more than 1000 years. A possible solution to this problem of storage could be transferring pictures from older media to newer ones every few years. Or by using one of the many free picture gallery websites which can store and display users' pictures in online albums.

Depression over Compression!

According to a recent report, a Texan company called Forgent Networks, is claiming the ownership of a popular method of shrinking and sharing images on the Internet. The method has been widely used for compressing large graphics files, as well as on the Internet, for almost two decades and files are identified by “.jpg” after the graphic file name. Forgent Networks acquired a patent from Compression Labs Inc. in 1997. The claim is that the code the patent refers to can be found in many technologies, including JPEG. The Joint Photographic Experts Group is the working group overseeing the jpeg and jbig standards, the committee's official title being ISO/IEC JTC1 SC29 Working Group 1. The committee have taken a look at the claim and currently believe that prior art exists. An aim of the JPEG committee is that its standards should be implementable in their baseline form without payment of royalty and license fees. Should Forgent Networks continue to demand royalties the ISO standards body will take the unprecedented step of withdrawing the JPEG image format as a formal standard and jpeg will be no more. Besides the royalty claims, Forgent Networks is taking the path of licensing deals with any interested party, however, the patent expires in 2004 and companies would be reluctant to enter into agreements that will become invalid in 2 years time. For more information please visit www.jpeg.org

Big brother watching your children

More and more schools are opting to fingerprint their pupils for identification when they use the library, often without the knowledge or consent of their parents. The use of such methods of replacing the library card has been condemned by the watchdog Privacy International. According to a media release, Privacy International and the children's rights group "Action on Rights for Children in Education" (ARCH) received a complaint from the mother of a child attending a primary school in London. The child had been fingerprinted without the parents' knowledge or consent. They have subsequently demanded the removal of the prints from the library computer system.

Privacy International warned that the practice of fingerprinting for the purpose of library cards was in clear violation of the Human Rights Act and the Data Protection Act. "The law states that privacy invasion must be

proportionate to the threat. A few lost library cards do not warrant mass fingerprinting" said Mr Davies, Director of Privacy International. It is also likely that the practice breaches Article 16 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that "no child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy...". For more information please visit www.privacyinternational.org

Memorandum of Understanding

The UK Government recently signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the British Standards Institute (BSI). This Memorandum strengthens the relationship between the government and BSI and acknowledges BSI's role in the development of International Standards. It shows the government's recognition of BSI as the National Standards Body (NSB) but it also acknowledges that the BSI now has commercial interests outside of its NSB role. This has meant that the NSB side has had to be ring fenced so that public funds provided for NSB activities do not get used in the non-NSB areas.

As standards become more international it is important that the government and BSI act together so that the UK negotiating position overseas is consistent and the Memorandum emphasises this close relationship.

New Chairman and New Image.

At the 100th Annual General Meeting of the BSI held recently a new chairman was elected. He is Sir David John KCMG and he replaces Vivian Thomas who has retired after 11 years. Just a couple of days before the AGM, BSI launched its new corporate logo worldwide. The new logo has been strengthened with a vibrant blue and a stronger yellow. All BSI Group companies will now use it across the world. It should make it easier for all customers to identify these companies and appreciate the wide range of services offered by the group.

Environmental Design Award

A special Environmental Design award from the BSI has been given to Sylvain Willenz, a student at the Royal College of Arts, who together with Yves Sinner, a designer from Luxembourg, have designed an environmentally friendly light source. The solar-powered light, based on light emitting diode technology, is low cost and very simple to operate. When facing upwards, a solar panel charges the batteries and in any other

orientation the light is switched on automatically and will give ten hours of light/day. There are no external moving parts and the unit is encased in resin, which protects it from dust and water. This invention, called 'Re-light' hopes to find a role in developing countries around the world and has been sent to Mediciens sans Frontieres for evaluation.

Skatepark Guidelines

The BSI has recently issued a set of guidelines for Skateparks. The guidelines, PAS 35:2002 "Specification for wheeled sports facilities", are a response to the huge growth in the demand for skateparks. These parks, used by skateboarders, roller-bladders and BMX bikers are often poorly designed and built and expose riders to additional and unnecessary risks – on top of the risks inherent in the sport itself. The

guidelines contain requirements for skatepark operators, such as local authorities, on:

- Location for the park
- Equipment construction and maintenance
- Safety features – such as self-closing gates to stop on-lookers from entering the area and notice boards with the location of first-aid facilities and the nearest phone
- Daily inspection routines plus annual inspections by experts.

The idea is not to detract from the thrill of the sport but to ensure that the environment is built safely and is well maintained.

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