



The New Quality Profession Challenge

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In the 20th century, the quality management discipline and the quality profession made a profound difference to the quality of life of everyone.

However, as we progress into this century, the quality management movement has lost purchase at the same time as organisations grapple with the challenges of delivering on customer and societal requirements in a faster, more global and more demanding environment than ever.

The quality community has the opportunity to make a difference again. To do so, we must understand the new world of the 21st century and how we must adapt to make that difference, just as government, organisations and other professions must also adapt.

This document outlines not only the journey so far, but, more importantly, it also outlines a vision for the quality profession as a compelling strategic business management function that helps organisations to sustain and thrive.

This is just the start of a new journey that has profound implications for the CQI, the quality profession and the global quality community.

21st Century challenges

The 21st century holds many challenges for the leaders of private and public-sector organisations. We live in a turbulent world where organisations must continually transform if they are to deliver sustained value to their shareholders and stakeholders. All too easily in this highly connected world, hard-earned competitive advantages and reputation can slip away.

One such competitive advantage is the sustained delivery of standout quality products and services. We have all benefited from the improvements in quality that have been achieved over the past 50 years in particular, yet we still live in a world where poor quality in the public and private sectors is reported and, more recently it appears with increasing frequency.

The quality failure challenge

Failure to manage quality in this fast-moving world is damaging the reputations and financial returns of major global brands and corporations.

Company

Toyota

(1) (19) (22)

Mattel (26)

Sony (27)

Hangzhou Zhongce Rubber Co. Ltd (25)

BP (20)

Quality issue	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorrect or out-of-place front driver's side floor mat causing pedal entrapment. - Sticking accelerator pedal. - Braking and software defects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recall in 2009 and 2010 of more than 10 million cars worldwide. - c. US\$2bn costs. - Reputational damage to Toyota.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The unauthorised use of lead paint in manufacture and the failure to detect it in the supply chain. - The inclusion of a choking hazard as a result of poor design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 14 million toys recalled. - At least one high-profile class action lawsuit. - c. £40m costs. - The attention of the world's press.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laptop batteries catching fire due to microscopic particles infiltrating the battery during manufacture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recall of c. 10 million laptop computer batteries made by Dell, Apple, Lenovo, Toshiba Gateway and Fujitsu. - Reputational damage to Sony and its customers' brands. - Costs to replace batteries independently estimated at £400m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Missing or defective gum strips that could lead to separation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - c. 450,000 tyres recalled. - Estimated tangible cost of failure at US\$50–80m.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explosion at the Deepwater Horizon rig reported to be caused by failure to test the cement around the oil well, and misinterpretation of test data that led to gas ignition. After the explosion, the blow-out preventer failed to activate and seal the well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of life. - Widespread environmental damage. - Effect on the livelihoods of local businesses. - Huge reputational damage to BP. - Numerous lawsuits that, to date, have led to more than US\$4.5bn in fines and payments.

The consumer confidence challenge

While it is easy to dwell on a few instances of high-profile failure, research data reports a worrying trend. Since 1993, the number of product recalls reported by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission increased by almost 4.5 times⁽⁶⁾. Consumers are concerned about these trends in product quality.

A recent study by marketing research firm Harris Interactive showed that consumers were very concerned about the recent string of product recalls. In a poll of more than 2,000 adults surveyed, 79% said they were aware of recalls that had occurred during the past three years, while 29% considered recalls to be of serious concern.

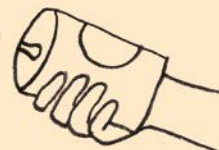
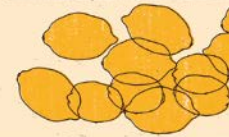
In 2013, Europe was shocked to hear that horsemeat had been introduced undetected into the supply chain for burgers sold in high-street supermarkets⁽²³⁾. Furthermore, in February 2014, *The Sunday Times* published a report by a West Yorkshire testing agency that found that “more than a third of products were either mislabelled or not what they claimed to be”.

For example, the mozzarella tested contained only 40% cheese, slimming tea contained a banned prescription drug, and fruit juice contained a flame retardant. Significantly, the newspaper reported that food testing activity had fallen by 25% over the past two years⁽²⁴⁾.

This trend is not just restricted to the traditional quality heartland of product manufacturing. We all expect confidence in our essential public services and, yet, in a report on the failings at the Winterbourne View care home, “...inspections by the Care Quality Commission found one in six nursing homes did not treat patients with dignity and respect...”⁽²⁾. Many will have read about the needless deaths of patients in the care of Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust. The Francis investigation, which aimed to determine how these failings went undetected for so long, said there were

“serious failures” at every level⁽³⁾. In 2011, three electricity distribution firms were fined a total of £1m for licence breaches in connections, admitting “...that system improvements should ensure there is no repeat...”⁽⁴⁾.

“A recent study by marketing research firm Harris Interactive showed that consumers were very concerned about the recent string of product recalls”





The supply chain challenge

The procurement profession reports increasing concern at the risks to the quality of products and services sourced. Research conducted by Achilles and IFF Research into attitudes to supplier pre-qualification activities indicated that chief procurement officers regarded a supplier's ability to deliver in terms of quality, timeliness and cost as their most important risk to manage, with 75% putting it in their top three risks⁽⁷⁾.

The research also revealed that 43% of businesses were aware of a high risk of suppliers failing to meet compliance requirements. In addition, 8% of organisations interviewed believed that more than half of their suppliers were "high risk" – defined as suppliers whose "financial failure, failure to deliver or failure to comply with relevant legislation or regulation would cause significant financial cost and/or reputational damage" to the buyer. The report also cited research carried out by the insurers Zurich into business continuity practice, which found that 85% of companies had suffered some kind of significant disruption.

"There are big opportunities to improve the value to society of better products and services that are not being sufficiently exploited"

The culture challenge

Of course, major reputational or financial costs are not just the consequence of design or process failures. We frequently read press reports of unethical behaviour by some of our biggest institutions. Without the conscience of the business that quality management can and should provide, companies can become exposed to the effects of inappropriate or unethical behaviour. Commentators have even linked the global financial crisis and follow-on instances of unethical practice (eg mis-selling of pensions, endowment, home income plans, precipice bonds, interest rate swaps and PPI) with quality failure.

Paul Moore, the former Head of Group Regulatory Risk at HBOS (part of the Lloyds Banking Group since 2009), warned senior executives of the perils of excessive risk-taking when he left in 2004. Moore was the only senior risk and compliance executive in the UK banking sector to speak out publicly, dubbing the crisis "...the biggest quality failure of all time".

As an experienced user of quality management, he proposed that, if the financial sector had thought in terms of quality rather than risk, compliance or governance, and had positioned culture and people above process and structure, the events leading up to the crisis could have been avoided⁽²⁰⁾.

The transformation challenge

Failure is not just restricted to the delivery of products and services. The way that major change is being mismanaged is damaging the reputations of high-quality brands. The BBC has just scrapped an IT project after admitting wasting nearly £100m, with the BBC Director-General Tony Hall stating “The DMI project has wasted a huge amount of licence fee payers’ money and I saw no reason to allow that to continue, which is why I have closed it. I have serious concerns about how we managed this project...”⁽⁵⁾.

“There is a significant challenge for organisations to focus on people-driven strategies to counter slow market and economic growth, and improve performance”

The improvement challenge

It is clear, therefore, that quality failure is harming society, damaging lives and costing billions, while at the same time shareholders and tax payers are seeing more money wasted as organisations persist in wasteful and inefficient working. However, the challenge to the profession is not just restricted to addressing these deteriorating trends. There are big opportunities to improve the value to society of better products and services that are not being sufficiently exploited.

This was a key finding of the Conference Board report of 2013⁽²⁹⁾, which focused on the challenges facing the leaders of some of the world’s major organisations. This survey of 729 CEOs, presidents and chairmen argued that, while our world was fast-moving, the high-growth strategies that dominated the debt-fuelled economies of the pre-financial crisis days had been replaced by strategies based on operational excellence. It reported that “there is a significant challenge for organisations to focus on people-driven strategies to counter slow market and economic growth, and improve performance”.

The survey concluded that these people-focused strategies should be built on leveraging human capital, innovation and operational excellence. It stated that “... meeting these challenges is about engaging and retaining talent, and improving processes and customer relationships to stay neck and neck with competitors, or even an inch or two ahead”. Specifically, CEOs expect operational excellence to be delivered more by engaging employees in improvement than by pure cost optimisation. This is less about improvement driven from failure and more about meeting the demands of competition, regulation, changing customer expectations, and public financial constraints. *(continued overleaf)*

The top five priorities for operational excellence listed were (in order):

1. Raise employee engagement and productivity
2. Focus on reduction in baseline costs
3. Break down internal silos
4. Drive continual improvement (Six Sigma, Total Quality, etc)
5. Seek better alignment between strategy, objectives and organisational capabilities.

In summary, the report drew attention to the need to measure effectiveness and efficiency, and to get alignment of an organisation's processes, strategies, tactics, culture and methodologies in such functions as finance, talent, governance and operations, which must be optimised to achieve the business objectives and goals.

Further recent research from the European Centre for Business Excellence⁽³⁴⁾, carried out to understand current quality issues, identified three key aspects affecting quality and six key areas to improve the "quality rating" of organisations.

The bottom line is that help is needed at the very top. The critical priorities listed above present a major opportunity for the quality profession, but only if the profession can gain more credibility with the leaders of organisations. To do this, the profession must urgently address commonly held perceptions that quality is a defensive strategy and not an offensive strategy.

Top 3 aspects affecting quality

Culture

This is the most important area. The business (led by the CEO) must care about quality. This demands quality of leadership, clarity of vision and direction and meaningful measurement of quality

Continuous improvement

This must be linked to measures and objectives, and, therefore, to culture

Supply chain management

Businesses must understand the impact of cost reduction in the supply chain on quality, and the potential lack of control through outsourcing arrangements

Problem areas to be addressed in order to improve the 'quality rating' of companies:

Product/service design process

Governance and rigour were often cited as key problems/issues, plus time-to-market pressures

Component supply

Quality of supply and outsourced manufacturing

Variation and process performance – consistency

Many organisations can achieve good quality but very few can do it every day, every year – all the best companies have that top level of consistency

Quality leadership

There is a widely held view that 'quality should be further up the management agenda' and communication of quality messages should be much clearer

Quality improvement approaches and tools

There is a need to improve the common understanding of which approaches and 'tools' to use in the support of continuous improvement

The contribution of quality management

It would be remiss to continue without acknowledging the contribution that quality management has made to society over the past 50 years, that research and good practice have identified.

Quality management has provided **greater assurance** in the quality of products and services, for example by:

- delivering quantum leaps in the inherent quality of products and in the ability to deliver consistent service⁽⁹⁾
- creating the practice of quality assurance linking the product or service requirements to the customers' needs and then facilitating the entire organisation to deliver to those requirements⁽⁹⁾
- the adoption of a range of models used to challenge and improve total organisational excellence, and providing value-adding audit and assessment methods⁽¹¹⁾.

Quality management has helped to **engage the whole organisation** in striving to meet customer, organisation and stakeholder requirements, for example by:



- increasing the focus on the entire end-to-end value chain
- establishing the disciplines of process management and the associated practice of quality engineering⁽⁹⁾
- developing a 'total systems' approach that integrates all of the company's management systems into one coherent set.



Quality management has **driven integrated improvement** in cost, quality and time performance, for example by:

- establishing a recognised portfolio of fact-based, data-driven business improvement tools and techniques, and enabling employee involvement from the frontline worker to executive level⁽⁹⁾
- coaching colleagues in understanding the concepts of variation and how to manage it⁽¹¹⁾.

After so many years of the development and application of quality management theory, why are we still seeing this trend of failure or lost opportunity?

Reasons for deteriorating trends

Speed, complexity, technology and globalisation

It could be argued that a contributory factor is the fast-changing world in which we live and work today. The business of delivering a product or service is getting more demanding and complex. Increasing product or service demands drive greater need for specialisation and hence the need for more complex value networks that bring together different parties. Therefore, greater collaboration is needed. In turn, increasing need for value for money has driven more globalisation of supply chains. Increased complexity can increase the impact of failure across a wider scope of businesses and customers, as problems become

more difficult to detect and affect more of these interdependent parties. Furthermore, increased use of the internet and social media means that bad news travels faster and further than ever before. Hence, systems need to be designed, delivered, run and modified better, faster, cheaper and with greater integrity than ever before (“right first time”). The evidence that trends are deteriorating suggests that the quality management discipline has not kept pace with the emerging factors in business, public service and not-for-profit work. In particular, there are four areas where more could have been done:

Quality management as strategic weapon

First, organisations are still working with misconceptions regarding the value quality can add. This is a result of failing to help stakeholders and the public to understand the role that quality management plays in improving society at large and, through our (the Profession's) behaviour, failing to shake off the myth that quality is all about compliance and inspection⁽¹⁹⁾. This also applies to the boardroom, where the quality professional still has insufficient influence. Unless we learn to speak the language of the boardroom, clearly linking quality directly to shareholder value⁽²¹⁾ then CEOs' eyes will continue to glaze over when on the receiving end of another audit report. We must put quality at the heart of the business as a "1st-tier" strategic weapon and not purely part of "operational defences"⁽¹⁹⁾.

Quality management as the customer conscience

Second, the profession has continued to place too much emphasis on application of quality tools and techniques, and not enough on building the 'conscience of the customer' into the entire fabric of our organisations⁽²¹⁾. To achieve this, more could be done to integrate the hard, analytical dimension of quality with the softer human factors approach (9), and in broadening the influence of quality management into all areas of the organisation, for example within sales and marketing, finance, HR, safety and environmental⁽¹³⁾.

Customised quality management

Third, quality management has not been at the heart of supporting the development of customised business models to meet increasingly complex demands⁽⁹⁾. It has not sufficiently assured the increasingly global and multi-tier supply chain nor effectively translated the improvement tools developed in volume-based product manufacturing to service industries, support services and low-volume, high-variety processing⁽¹⁴⁾. Indiscriminate use of quality systems has depersonalised key people-based service industries to the extent that providers feel too divorced from the customer and their needs.

Quality management in transformation

Finally, the profession has failed to grasp the opportunity to extend quality management wisdom into large-scale transformational change management (eg, programme assurance). Quality management is a robust systematic approach to management in general and can provide very valuable frameworks for programme delivery and assurance. So much of a quality professional's work involves managing change and this experience can be put to better use. A 2014 study of change management success in more than 800 organisations across 22 countries found that "projects with excellent change management programmes were six times more likely to meet or exceed their objectives than those with poor change management programmes"⁽³⁰⁾.

The quality profession view

The CQI has recognised that it must play a leading role in delivering change in the profession, not just in the value that its professionals deliver but in the way in which leaders perceive them. It has realised that it has a key role in defining “what good looks like” in terms of its professional contribution⁽¹⁹⁾.

The CQI membership view

In recognition of this need, the CQI surveyed its membership⁽¹⁵⁾ to identify what they wanted to see change. What emerged was a key message that the profession and the CQI needed to change, and that there was an appetite among the respondents to do so; but, they needed the CQI’s support.

Some notable responses were:

- Members accepted that more must be done to re-balance the profession away from too much emphasis on assurance activities and more towards improving the bottom-line and driving transformation. Members recognised that, worse still, “Quality is often seen as adding bureaucracy and slowing processes”.
- Members wanted more to be done to raise the profile of the profession. Almost 60% wanted the CQI to engage more with employers – the CQI should “...engage employers to explain to them what ‘quality’ means”. Members also wanted the term “quality professional” to be better and more widely understood – the CQI should “...take the lead in changing the public’s perception of quality”.
- Members wanted the CQI to provide the basis for professional credibility. Nearly 70% of respondents cited the most important reason for joining the CQI as evidencing their professional credibility. But in support of this, the CQI needed to do more to raise its profile – “The company pays, but does not recognise you as an organisation; they do not understand the CQI. Customers also need to be made aware of you”.
- Members wanted the CQI to provide more career support and guidance. One of the key areas for improvement cited by respondents was greater career guidance – “It is very important to my company that we keep up-to-date with our professional development”.

The view from CQI Branches, both in the UK and as far away as Hong Kong, has reinforced these messages, underlining the need and appetite for change within the quality profession. This is driven by a desire for the quality management discipline and the quality profession to be significantly better valued by employers and organisations, and, consequently, for membership of the CQI Institute to be recognised as the gold standard for professionalism.

The quality leaders' views

To add to this, the CQI has commissioned a short piece of research to canvass the views of leading professionals. The purpose was to collect their impressions on the current state of the profession, the challenges it faces and how it must respond. The following summary material is based on their experience in their professional lives, including anecdotes from their careers and professional development. A list of those who contributed is given at the end of the publication. Interviewees were asked a series of questions relating to the development of their careers in quality, their views on the challenges facing the profession, how they have been successful as agents for change and learning points that they would wish to share with fellow professionals. A number of themes emerged that support the case for change in the profession.

1. Quality professionals of the future must have a broad set of skills

To meet the challenges outlined above, quality professionals will need to acquire a broad base of skills and experience. It is from this perspective that they will be better able to understand the complexity of today's demands and problems. Although those interviewed cited a variety of routes by which they came into the profession, the prevailing wisdom was that a broad business experience is vital for success. Many had held senior jobs in operations and commercial functions and so are better able to understand the full spectrum of organisational issues. The interviewees cited

a number of potential problem areas in the capability of the profession as a whole, eg lack of business competence and cross-functional experience, weakness in the leadership of quality as a discipline and gaps in formal management skills.

This requires the quality profession to define the required competencies and experience needed to develop effective future quality leaders and teams, and work with management development programmes to deliver it. It is the learning and development needs that are the greatest – we need a consistent approach for training quality professionals so that the competencies remain uniform. This could be achieved by moving people around various parts of the business. The CQI needs to play a role here to encourage this broad-based development – “to reach this grade of quality professional, you need to follow this (defined) route”.

In turn, continued professional development should be encouraged where formal processes are less able to deliver the required results. For example, one respondent referred to the need to better understand organisational behaviour and how people react to change. This helped to get to the real root cause of problems in implementing a key transformation programme. Of particular importance was not to take a strong agenda into interventions and engagements, but to work to clearly understand the situation from all sides, specifically the customer and the people that needed help. This required the development of interpersonal skills that were found very useful in diffusing difficult situations.

A recurring theme was the importance of developing quality professionals with the right blend of skills and experience in quality assurance, quality control and quality improvement. In some industries, quality professionals continue to remain

specialists in one of these areas rather than having a rounded capability in all three. This is perceived to be a particular challenge in smaller companies where constraints require more generalist skills. One interviewee cited the risk of over-specialising for too long; for example, five years in BMS, five years in business improvement and four years in product quality work, rather than gaining more of a mix of skills through an integrated professional development programme earlier in their career. It is very important that quality professionals do not become siloed too soon or for too long.

2. Quality professionals are in ideal positions to facilitate the integration of the entire end-to-end value network from the perspective of the customer and citizen

One of the elements of the profession that has attracted and retained the leaders interviewed was the variety of work, helping people to succeed and seeing the whole end-to-end operation functioning well. If quality is to be “the conscience of the business” then it must lead the rest of the organisation in seeing the whole end-to-end network (outside as well as inside of the organisation) from the perspective of the customer. The quality profession must drive a focus that is cross-functional and not siloed, forming and working with teams that improve value streams that encompass the full gambit of supply, demand and cost, and who can work with all stakeholders to deliver value. In turn, quality professionals must be ready to and capable of influencing the organisational design and structure that will drive the right behaviours. However, the interviewees observed that quality professionals can themselves be too influenced by organisational structures and job titles, rather than being true leaders that drive end-to-end business improvement.

The interviewees have gained great satisfaction from building sustainable quality organisations

and getting a critical mass of the right people involved in quality improvement – seeing people that the quality profession has trained and coached start to use the ‘language of quality.’ This has established the foundation for a sustainable quality approach staffed by a critical mass of quality professionals who are capable of continuing the journey into the future.

3. Quality people must be agents for broad-based business change

Armed with this cross-functional perspective and a wider set of skills and experience, the quality professional can then become a more influential agent for driving change in the business. One respondent noted that the profession must be seen as agents for change and shake off this image of “clipboard carriers”.

Not surprisingly, continued cost-reduction is seen as an important priority for change but there is a risk that many organisations are focusing on cost-cutting rather than driving down costs in an “intelligent way”. Problems occur when organisational structures are built around small units or departments that are incentivised to run as efficiently as possible – as small profit and loss or cost centres – with little or no perspective for the overall end-to-end result. This drives managers to primarily ensure that their department or function is working well rather than balancing this with a concern for the end-to-end outcomes.

The respondents noted that, as cost reduction is driven forward, organisations may be forced into increasing outsourcing volume. Continued outsourcing requires effective planning and proper quality controls to ensure continuity of quality of services and supply. If this is not addressed then increased risk can creep into the business. If the conscience of the customer in the business is weak then these risks can be underestimated and misunderstood.

4. Quality professionals need to improve their ability to talk the language of the business

If the quality profession is going to be part of driving the changes needed, it must improve its competence in business and capability to speak in financial terms. Moreover, the interviewees believe that the profession does not generally use the language of business leaders (ie, “board-level speak”). The approach of the quality professional must be to put quality on the agenda in a way that resonates with the senior team. To do this, the profession must think like executives. Quality professionals must be seen as constructive and must move away from the negative approaches they are often associated with (eg, policing roles, arbiters of conformance, non-value adding auditors and assessors, critics of senior management behaviour).

The respondents had some good suggestions for how quality professionals could address these gaps:

- Help your organisation to understand the full cost of quality, rather than just focusing on the cost of poor quality. This will then motivate, incentivise, recognise and reward people to work on building prevention rather than just looking to reduce the cost of failure once it has happened. This will speak more effectively to the language of management.
- Help to quantify the waste, capture the customer perceptions, and create the business case for hiring/developing people who have the right mix of solid business experience, together with a deep knowledge of quality assurance, quality control and quality improvement. The right people at that level will not be afraid to carry the “Quality” title and will start to lead and spread the change
- Although quality professionals rarely have the experience or the perspective to be directly involved in the development of business strategy, there is more work to be done to

help strategic execution, which is generally thought to be a weakness. This is an area in which quality can help. The so-called Hoshin Kanri process is one example of a quality-based approach that can assist senior management and hence improve the board-level contribution of the quality professional

Quality professionals need to talk a different game. It is all about making what they do relate to what impacts the top management agenda. They must have evidence of problems and show data that translates the issues into metrics and outcomes that management care about. They must also be provided with evidence of gains and know how to sell it. Quality professionals need to use measures that top management can understand. Change needs to start from the top of the organisation and so the quality professional must have a voice at the top table. The case for quality must be made with reference to facts based on customers and other stakeholders, and presented in language and perspectives that resonate with leaders.

5. The quality profession must help its colleagues in other functions to make better use of its skills and experiences

If the stated changes are to be made then there is a need to better equip senior managers to work well with their quality professionals and to benefit more from the value they can bring. The respondents have met with managers in operations, finance, marketing and sales who are not sufficiently aware of the quality performance of their companies, putting them at a distinct disadvantage in commercial negotiations. Without a better knowledge of quality, such managers can make very commercially driven decisions without the benefit of an assessment of risk that the quality professional should be well-equipped to provide.
(continued overleaf)

This has not been helped where there has been a blind adherence to quality systems and ISO certification. ISO 9000 and other standards have provided a structure for quality management and have delivered value in providing a common vocabulary and concepts. However, within this structure people can be found doing things for the wrong reasons. Hence, ISO can become “a double-edged sword”. It is acknowledged that the profession has encouraged a focus on quality management, but it is not being transferred fully across organisations and many ISO approaches are too reactive and overly-bureaucratic. A number of the interviewees shared the view that ISO can become too much of a “tick in a box” process and in some organisations there is an over-focus on compliance. If the ISO approach is too reactionary it will not get buy-in. Instead, we really need to be talking about conformity, ie, conforming to the needs of customers, society and values, because it makes sense and is a more compelling reason for adoption.

The interviewees felt that the image of the profession in general has progressively degenerated as other improvement approaches, such as Lean and Six Sigma, have been increasingly adopted by managers who tend not to understand that they should be part of a comprehensive quality approach. The failure of the quality profession has been to allow this to happen; their talk of processes, metrics, audits and certifications has not been properly understood, whereas the other areas (eg process excellence or business improvement functions) speak of “winning dollars”, reducing lead times and freeing cash tied up in inventories. There is great potential in the quality professional to deliver these results, but these strengths are often too deeply disguised in traditional quality language to be visible to senior executives.

6. The quality profession is not generally afforded the status it deserves and must now acquire if the challenges of the 21st century are to be met in industry, commerce and the public services

The interviewees all welcomed the new CQI Competency Framework and see it as a clear and consistent articulation of what the quality profession must become. Chartered status is thought to be a good step for the profession and there should be further opportunities to raise its profile. However, chartered status must not be seen as a badge but rather a vehicle for improvement in the profession.

Quality does not have a strong enough voice in industry, commerce and the public sector. When big failures occur, do we see a senior and respected member of the profession being asked for comment? For example in the NHS, quality has regressed to being more inspection-orientated. There is immense time pressure on form-filling making it more difficult to focus on the core health service work. Managers are spending time on governance, inspection, auditing and correction, and not necessarily thinking about prevention. As a result, appraisal and failure costs are going up and prevention investments are reducing. And when the inevitable failure occurs, will this image lead to an invitation for comment?

The respondents thought that through this initiative, the CQI can help by speaking out about how some of the 21st century quality challenges should be dealt with. It should raise its profile and be seen to comment on major issues in the public domain. This, in turn, would raise the profile and reputation of the quality profession.

Lessons could be learned from what has happened within the finance and human

“As a result, appraisal and failure costs are going up and prevention investments are reducing. And when the inevitable failure occurs, will this image lead to an invitation for comment?”

resources professions; in particular the latter, having transformed itself from Personnel into Human Resources. Members of these professions have become go-to people for matters that they are well known to be able to address and the quality profession should learn from this. This will improve when senior managers at board level better understand how quality professionals can make an impact. We could also benefit from links with other professional bodies, such as the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

People are generally not seeing quality as a career of choice; many people just “fall into quality”. There is a need for more degree-level training in quality engineering and quality management. There is a perception that the quality profession is largely made up of people in the latter stages of their careers, or that quality is seen as a bit of a “through-station” rather than a destination that people really want to get to. This exacerbates the real struggle to get good people into the quality profession.

Of course, all of these issues represent opportunities for improvement, but there is felt to be a lack of awareness of these challenges

within the profession. To better attract new people to the profession there is the need to “sell” the work of quality professionals. We need to tell people in their language what we do in order that people are not switched off by incorrect perceptions and myths. We need to show the breadth and impact of quality, and how we can make a difference. We need to better sell the profession, getting involved earlier at times of career choice in schools, colleges and universities.

It is important to publicise success stories, but to do so in a way that the executive committees see the benefit of quality; to really portray the need to be cross-functional and to use the value chain approach to get alignment across the whole organisation. We need to make the quality profession look interesting and to set the possibilities of large-scale improvement so that businesses can be properly guided and the right people are drawn into the profession. Wherever possible, criteria for the promotion of people in other disciplines should reference the extent of understanding of quality principles.

One area in which quality is often not given respect is when management is very focused on output. It is essential to turn that focus around to the customer by working with the management team and key people in the various roles within the supply chain. The leadership team often needs help to see quality as a key agenda item – helping them to do so will earn respect for the quality profession. This should not be done by “banging the table” and playing the “policeman” role, but by obtaining data that shows the impact of quality, helping people to understand the problems and fixing them. Such a body of evidence must be of sufficient value that it will not switch people off; indeed, people throughout the supply chain should then come to ask for advice. The focus here must be genuinely to change the perception of quality.

Building on our success

Building on the successes of the past and addressing these areas for improvement is now the role of the new quality professional – to be an influencer in the task of meeting the global challenges.

Encouragingly, as we have already seen, the profession is in a good position to do this, having met some difficult challenges in the past and being uniquely placed to deliver value by working across all of the other functions. We see the whole system, end-to-end and top to bottom, both inside the business and outside. We know why failure occurs and, equally, we know what makes and sustains excellent quality.

The quality profession must respond to this challenge. We must lead organisations in speeding up the pace of change while de-risking the agenda. In short, we need to create a world with **quality at the heart of every organisation**.

The CQI has a vision of quality as a strategic business management function that will help organisations to change their cultures.

To make this vision a reality, quality professionals must expand the application of quality concepts and techniques to all business processes and functions, and develop new forms of providing assurance of quality at every supplier-customer interface. They will need to

know the entire cycle of products or services, from concept to the ultimate end user.

In future, successful quality professionals will be key influencers in the response to the dramatically changing landscape and will help to explain:

- why the answer is not ever more dogmatic use of philosophies or tools;
- how quality professionals can better align with the interests and language of the executive board, owners and other key stakeholders;
- how we can build quality into the fabric of the business/organisation and its people;
- how quality management can make a real difference to the business/organisation – delivering meaningful change.

In some organisations, management systems are still viewed in terms of the internal dynamics between marketing, design, sales, production/operations, distribution and accounting. A change is required from this view to a larger process-based system that encompasses and integrates the business interests of customers and suppliers across what is an increasingly complex network. Managements need to develop an in-depth understanding of these relationships



and how they may be used to cement the customer-supplier partnership concept. Who is best placed to be an organisation's focal point in this respect, and be equipped to gauge internal and external customers' expectations and degree of satisfaction? Why, the quality profession, of course, who should also identify deficiencies in all business functions and processes, and promote improvements.

To achieve this, the role of the quality profession is to make quality an inseparable aspect of every employee's performance and responsibility, not just part of in-line operations. The transition in many companies from their present quality departments to this more facilitative approach requires careful planning, direction and monitoring.

Quality professionals have developed numerous techniques and skills, focused on product or service quality. In many cases, there is a need to adapt these to broader process applications.

The first objective for many quality professionals is gradually to disengage themselves from functional line-type activities, which will then need to be dispersed throughout the appropriate operating departments. This should allow quality to be understood as a process at a senior level and to be concerned with the following throughout the organisation:

- promoting partnerships in relationships with customers and suppliers
- designing, planning, managing, auditing, and reviewing quality management systems
- planning and providing training and coaching
- encouraging and facilitating improvement
- monitoring and evaluating the progress of improvement
- giving advice to management on:
 - o the establishment of process management and control
 - o relevant statutory/legislation requirements with respect to quality
 - o the inclusion of quality elements in all processes, job instructions and procedures

“We must cease regarding ourselves purely as technical experts and position ourselves as leaders who champion customer and stakeholder value”

- o quality and process improvement programmes
- o accelerating the delivery of change where risk and impact are actively managed.

Quality directors and managers may have an initial task of helping those who control the means to implement this concept – the leaders of industry and commerce – to really believe that quality must become an integral part of all of their organisations' operations.

These shifts in philosophy will require considerable staff education in many organisations. Not only must people in other functions acquire quality management skills, but quality personnel must also change old attitudes and acquire new skills – replacing the inspection, calibration, specification-writing mentality with knowledge of defect prevention, wide-ranging process-based quality management systems design, audit and improvement.

The challenge for many of us in the quality profession is not so much making changes in our organisation, as in recognising the changes required in ourselves so that we are able to change the often-perceived attitude of the quality profession as an “inspection police force” into that of a consultative, team-oriented improvement resource. This emphasis on prevention and improvement-based systems elevates the role of quality professionals from a technical one to that of general management.

A narrow, departmental view of quality is totally out of place in an organisation operating successfully in the 21st century, and quality professionals will continually need to widen their perspective and increase their general knowledge of the business to encompass all facets of the

organisation. Indeed, recent research from the European Centre for Business Excellence (34) proposed the kind of quality leaders required for the 21st century:

- “They will need first and foremost to be business people, with multifunctional experience, who understand and speak the language of business and can relate to those running the business;
- The lack of that type of person generally in quality is the root cause of complaints about top management from most quality people – but, it is because they are not thinking like the right people!”

Bosses need to be able to turn to the quality management professional to set the standards and drive improvement – quality leaders will need to be of that ilk; people who can truly support policy deployment and redefine quality management in this century. The research (34) provided five top tips for how to break out of the “old quality department” mentality:

- Learn about the business first; quality second
- Speak the language of the board – literally, and in terms of what interests them
- Understand what quality means from the customer’s perspective
- Measure the £/\$/€
- Be commercial

Simon Feary, Chief Executive of the CQI, has summed up the challenge the profession faces:

“We are in a good place. The UK has recognised the importance of the quality management discipline through the award of chartered status to our organisation and profession. The significance of that charter is brought into sharp relief every week as our news media confront us with examples of quality failures that compromise safety, waste billions, damage the reputations of our organisations and, ultimately, compromise the competitiveness of the economy. In highlighting big-ticket quality failure, it would be glib or disingenuous to say

that executive teams are not deeply concerned with the quality of services or products that they provide, or improving their organisation’s capability to deliver them. They have to be, and are. Over the past two years, we have actively engaged with a growing number of industry sectors and employers in order to understand their current views and future expectations of the quality profession.

“In November 2012, the CQI established a panel of senior quality management practitioners – the CQI Professional Policy Panel (PPP) – to advise us on the standing of our profession. The responses have been consistent and often

“it would be glib or disingenuous to say that executive teams are not deeply concerned with the quality of services or products that they provide”

uncomfortable. The world is changing and so must the profession if we are to build on our solid foundations and help organisations navigate the challenges of the 21st century.

“We must cease regarding ourselves purely as technical experts and position ourselves as leaders who champion customer and stakeholder value, who mitigate the risk of failure, and who drive a culture of evaluation and improvement. CQI members have recognised the need for change and, in defining the vision and leadership skills required, the CQI is setting the foundations for that change. We must speak with one voice on the role and value of the quality profession to other professions, peers, and colleagues. And we must commit to leading and delivering that value.”

A vision for the quality profession

One of the first steps on the change journey is to develop a vision for our profession. **That quality professionals are valued by organisations for establishing and ensuring:**

Good governance

Ensuring the interests of customers and stakeholders are understood and respected.

Agile assurance

Establishing appropriate methodologies to protect and enhance reputation through the mitigation of risk.

Evaluation and improvement

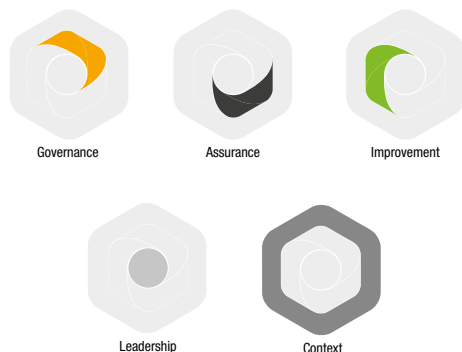
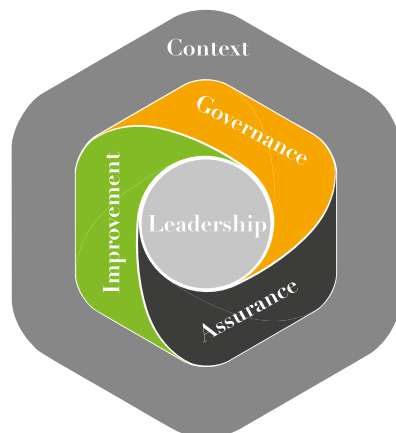
Transforming ways of working to maximise effectiveness and eliminate unnecessary cost and waste.

Vision statements can exist as pure aspiration without the substance as to how this picture of the future will be realised.

To address this risk, the vision is augmented with three important components of the required transformation:

- A statement of our professional brand
- A statement of our unique skill set
- The factors that must be achieved to deliver the vision

The quality profession brand



The CQI Competency Framework

It is important to note that the intent of the framework is not to set a requirement for all those involved in quality management and improvement to be subject-matter experts in all areas. Indeed, the application levels recognise that specialists are as important in our field as they are in other management disciplines, and that depth and breadth of knowledge and skill vary according to application level. However, the framework does emphasise the importance of everyone in the profession understanding how they fit into the overall quality context – be they supplier assurance specialists, Six Sigma Black Belts, or Senior Vice President/Director of Quality and Operational Excellence.

So why can this also be considered to be a leadership framework? It is because the professional must shift from a back-foot position as second-tier managers to a role as first-tier leaders in their organisations. In that way, our profile will increase and our contributions will be even more significant.

This framework is designed to be used by:

- **Individuals** – as a professional development tool
- **Employers** – as a common standard for defining skills for the range of quality professionals, and indeed other staff
- **Industry sectors** – to develop supporting sector-specific bodies of knowledge

- **The CQI** – as a basis for the development of its professional standards, knowledge and learning services, and as a basis to communicate the value of the profession.

The critical success factors

If we are to achieve this vision, what is critical to deliver and how we will know we are there?

The CQI believes that to do this we, the profession, must:

- Embrace the need for, and the agenda for, change in the profession
- Improve the overall capability of the profession; we will all need to change in some way
- Create a path for qualification that builds credibility and confidence
- Provide the resources to address education and training needs
- Continue to encourage more people from different backgrounds and age profiles to join what is an increasingly exciting and valuable career
- Gain support from the other professions with which we interface
- Have a CQI that provides the direction, support, encouragement and suitable governance to assure that the above is delivered.

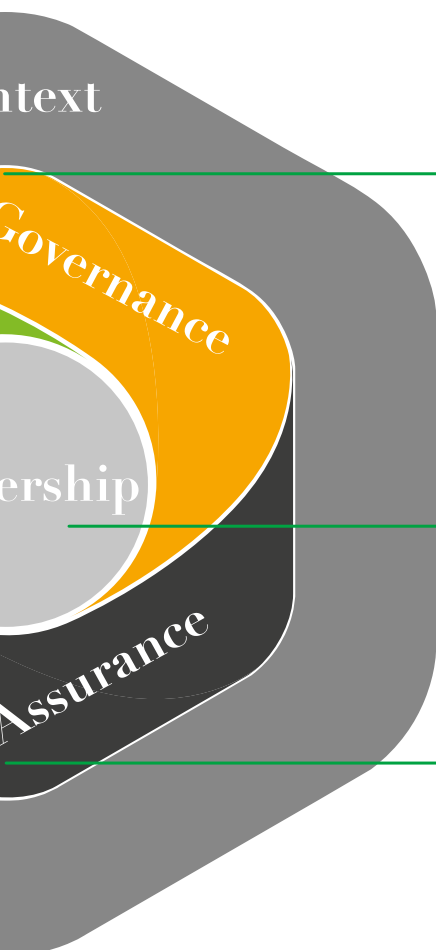
The Competency Framework

A closer look

● **Context:** Uses domain and/or industry-specific knowledge to ensure effective implementation of governance, assurance and improvement

● **Improvement:** Facilitates a culture of evaluation (both qualitative and quantitative), learning and improvement which drives more effective, efficient and agile ways of working to support business strategy, enhance reputation and increase profitability





Governance: Ensures that all organisation requirements are reflected in operational frameworks, policies, processes and plans, and that these meet all stakeholder requirements



Leadership: Uses leadership behaviours to maximise influence and develop a culture of evaluation and improvement



Assurance: Embeds a culture of assurance to ensure that policies, processes and plans are effectively implemented, and that all outputs (both internal and deliverable) are consistent with requirements

The Competency Framework

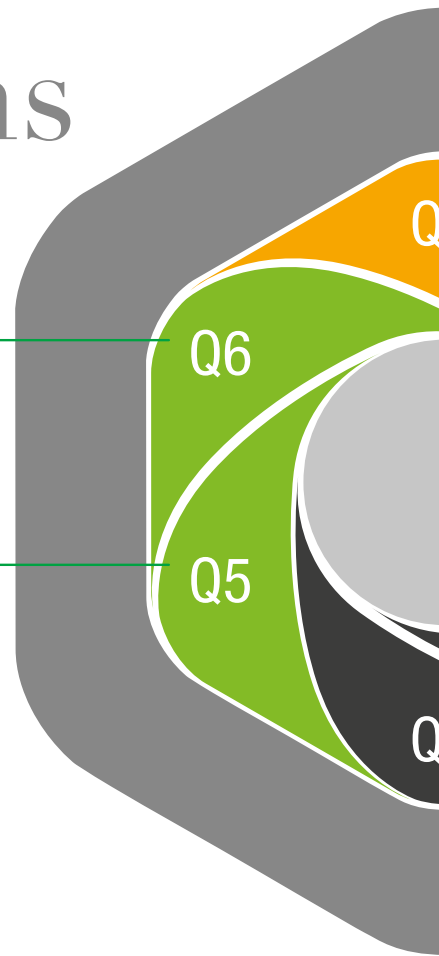
The questions

Improvement

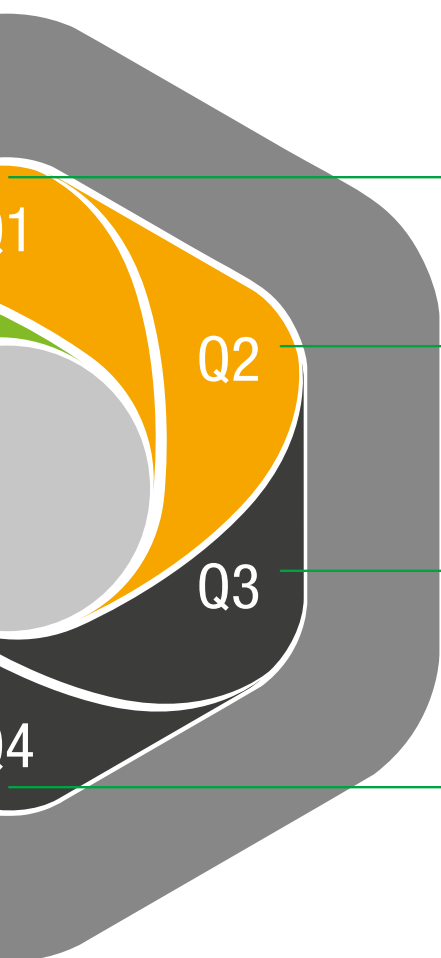
Is there a commitment to continuous improvement (and redefining management intent)? ●

Improvement

Is there a culture of objective evaluation? ●



The responsibility of the Quality Professional is simply to **both at the Operational and Organisational Level**, in with meeting stakeholder requirements and so pro



Governance

- Is management intent defined?

Governance

- Is management intent fit for purpose?

Assurance (Process)

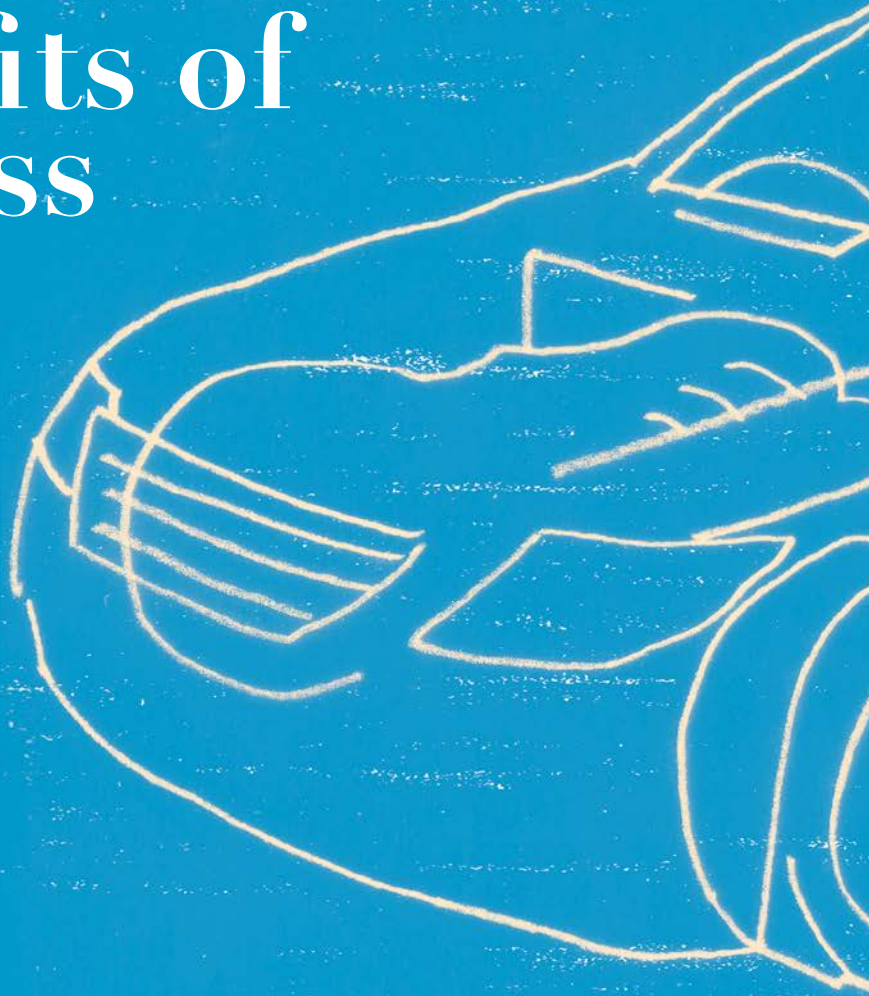
- Is management intent effectively implemented?

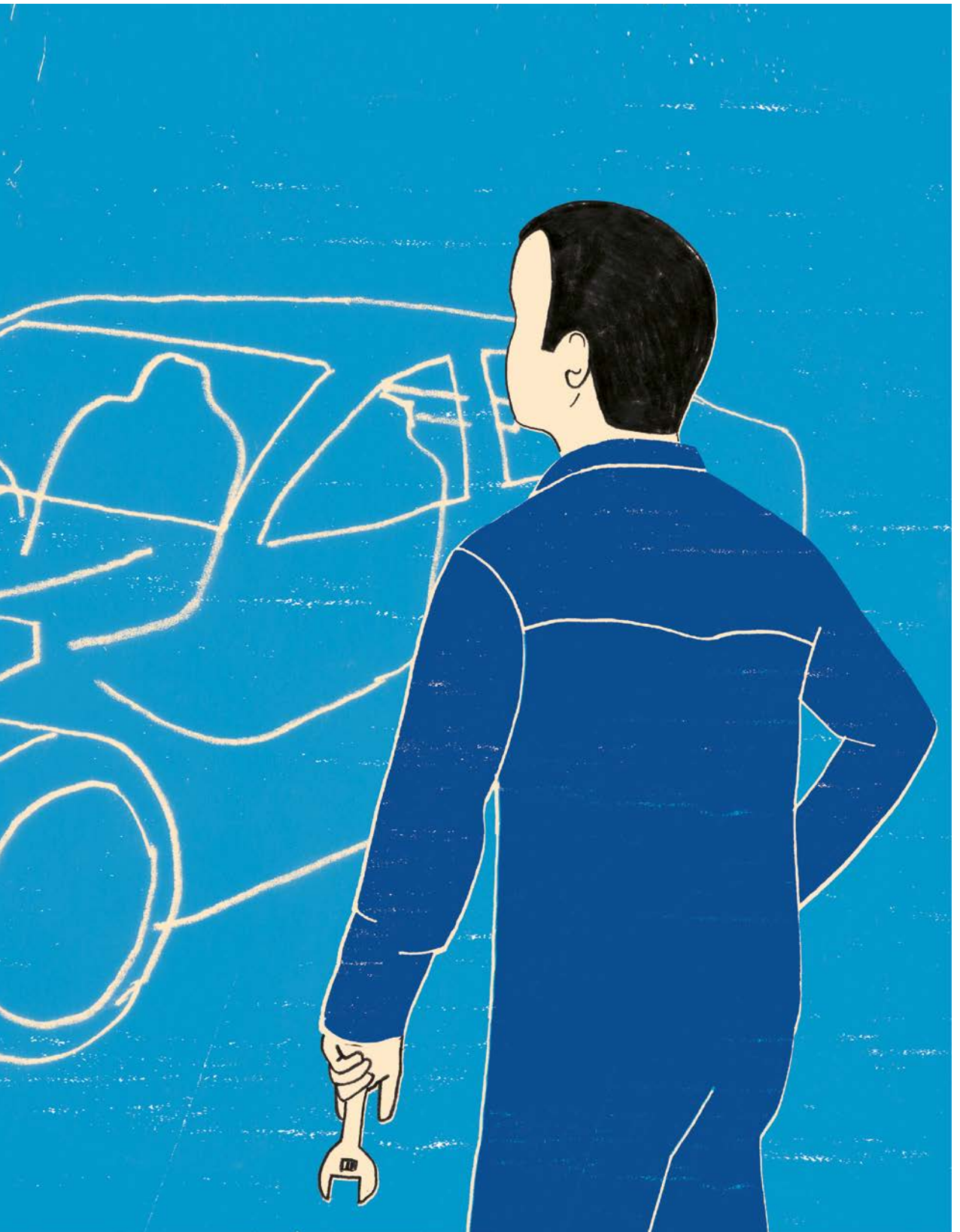
Assurance (Product)

- Does it produce the desired outcomes?

To ask and attain satisfactory answers to these questions, you need to identify, report and address any risks associated with the process to protect and enhance reputation and improve efficiency.

The implications of failure and benefits of success





“During Toyota’s period of multiple recalls, its share prices in New York and Tokyo traded between 50% and 60% of prior 2006 highs and most recent 2014 results respectively”

If the quality of products and services does not keep pace with increasing consumer expectations then companies will lose market share. The Harris Interactive survey cited earlier also provided the details of consumers’ reactions to increasing product recall volumes: while 55% of people said they would switch brands temporarily in the case of a safety and health recall on a product they usually purchase, a full 15% said they would never again purchase the recalled brand. Additionally, 21% of those polled said they would avoid using any brand made by the manufacturer of the recalled product⁽⁸⁾. In turn, closer monitoring by the media will increase the reputational impact of the instance of major failure in the delivery of products and services⁽⁶⁾. The threats are not just confined to traditionally competitive markets. Health service reform and increasing competition in the delivery of utilities will mean that previous monopoly providers could lose their mandate to provide public services⁽³⁾.

Continued failure will also erode shareholder value. Prior research has indicated that prospective investors have lowered their expectations of a firm’s future performance in response to the announcement of product recalls⁽⁶⁾. During Toyota’s period of multiple recalls, its share prices in New York and Tokyo traded between 50% and 60% of prior 2006 highs and most recent 2014 results respectively (pre the latest recall announcement)^(31,32).

Regulation is increasing in scope and influence, and is handing out tougher penalties for failure to meet industry standards. The UK government has recently announced changes to the authority of the energy regulators that will allow them “sweeping powers to inspect premises, seize data and levy much higher financial penalties”⁽³³⁾. This is in addition to the multi-million pound fines that have been handed out to energy companies over the last two years. Fines are also high-profile in parts of the media and financial services industry and, here, executives are facing



court action and possible imprisonment. The costs of failure are high.

Opportunities to exploit sources of competitive advantage will be lost. Management systems are predicted to evolve in response to the change in the nature of the relationships that organisations have with their stakeholders and constituent parts. Virginia Rometty of IBM recently wrote that “Data constitute a vast new natural resource... the firm’s role will be less about coordinating work with greater efficiency and more about using the new natural resource of data to innovate with greater transparency and authenticity”⁽¹⁶⁾. But, there is evidence that data quality is an area that still requires improvement – “Studies show that knowledge workers waste a great deal of time looking for data, identifying and correcting errors, and seeking confirmatory sources for data they do not trust. And the financial, reputational, and organisational consequences of bad data can be severe”⁽¹⁸⁾. Quality professionals and their organisations



“21% of those polled said they would avoid using any brand made by the manufacturer of the recalled product”

will be left behind if they do not adapt to these trends.

The benefits to organisations and society if we succeed

All this might seem like a huge challenge, but the benefits to business and society are equally significant. If the profession as a whole can deliver the value that it is capable of providing, then new opportunities will emerge for our stakeholders.

First, and most importantly, **the frequency and impact of failures such as those quoted above will reduce**, and the benefits are clear. However, it is not only about reducing failure. **There is scope for exploiting the opportunities that new technology and the proliferation of data provide**⁽¹⁶⁾. For example, mobile communications provide the capability for delivering information directly to the point of need, improving the quality and timeliness of decisions. Increases in computing power

and the speed of telecommunications are creating new opportunities to build value from innovative combinations of knowledge and information. These create new opportunities for enhanced learning from environments that are built to be “knowledge-based”⁽⁹⁾. With the end-to-end and top-to-bottom perspectives that the profession possesses, we are uniquely placed to exploit these exciting opportunities for our organisations.

Second, **customers, consumers and citizens will enjoy greater choice, personalisation and flexibility of the products and services** that they consume, as well as greater participation in the configuration and delivery of such products and services^(14,16). These factors create further challenges in meeting and exceeding these developing expectations that our profession can help address.

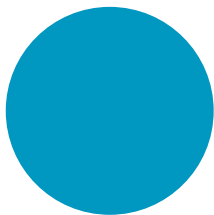
Third, **the new quality professional will make an invaluable contribution to the efficient use of capital** in the public services, as well as in private enterprise to the benefit of shareholders and other stakeholders. Prior studies of the financial results of quality award-winning companies have shown consistent positive impacts year-on-year⁽¹⁷⁾.

Fourth, **scarce resources will be used more efficiently** (eg energy, materials, people and skills). There is an opportunity for quality professionals to make even more of an impact on the sustainability agenda.

Finally, **the work of the quality professional will be more rewarding**. Colleagues will value their professional advice and counsel, board executives will include them in more wide-ranging decisions, other professions will respect their expertise, work will be less about defending poor performance and more about enjoying success, society will recognise them for what they contribute, and talent will be attracted and retained.



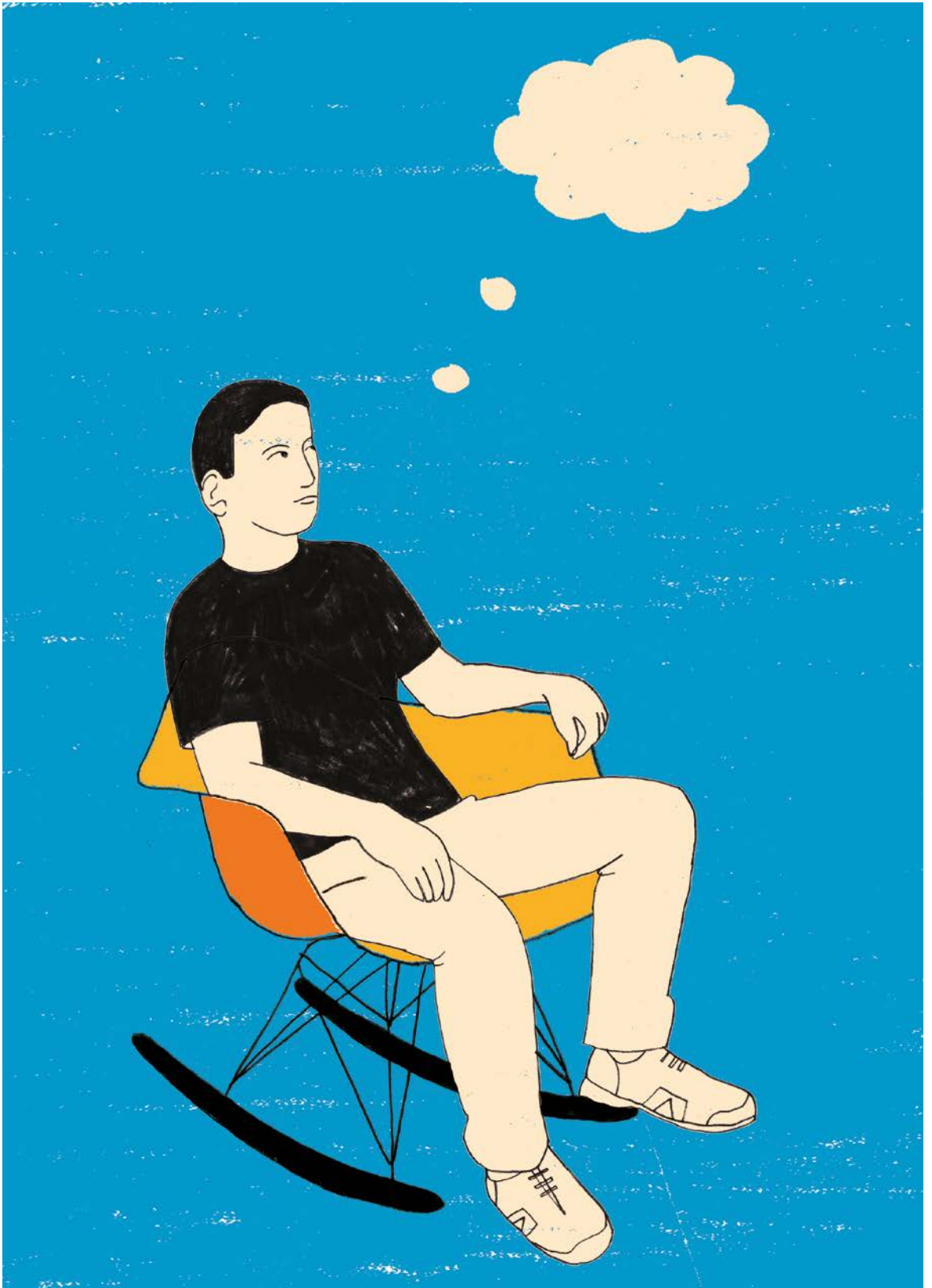
What
to do
next



If you are excited by the opportunity to be part of the delivery of this new vision for the profession, the CQI is preparing to guide and support you. We are planning to lead the way by significantly improving the scope and quality of the services that we provide to our members.

For example, you can expect to see the following happening over the coming months: new CQI Body of Quality Knowledge resources, a review of the CQI professional membership standards, and continued engagement with employers to promote the value of qualified, quality professionals at all levels.

In turn, the CQI seeks a commitment from the quality profession to support and deliver the vision for the profession. If you are a practising quality professional but not a member of the CQI, we would encourage you to come on board and join the journey; to engage and get involved in making the vision come alive.





final
word. ●

This document has outlined the challenges that businesses and society face, how the quality profession can make a unique contribution to addressing risk and maximising opportunity, the route that the CQI is proposing and supporting, and the costs or benefits to society at large if the profession responds. This is a great opportunity for us all to make our contribution to the future. Are you ready and willing to take part?

We leave the final word with the sample of quality leaders interviewed above, who were asked to consider the future vision for the quality profession and give examples of the value they have provided to their organisations:

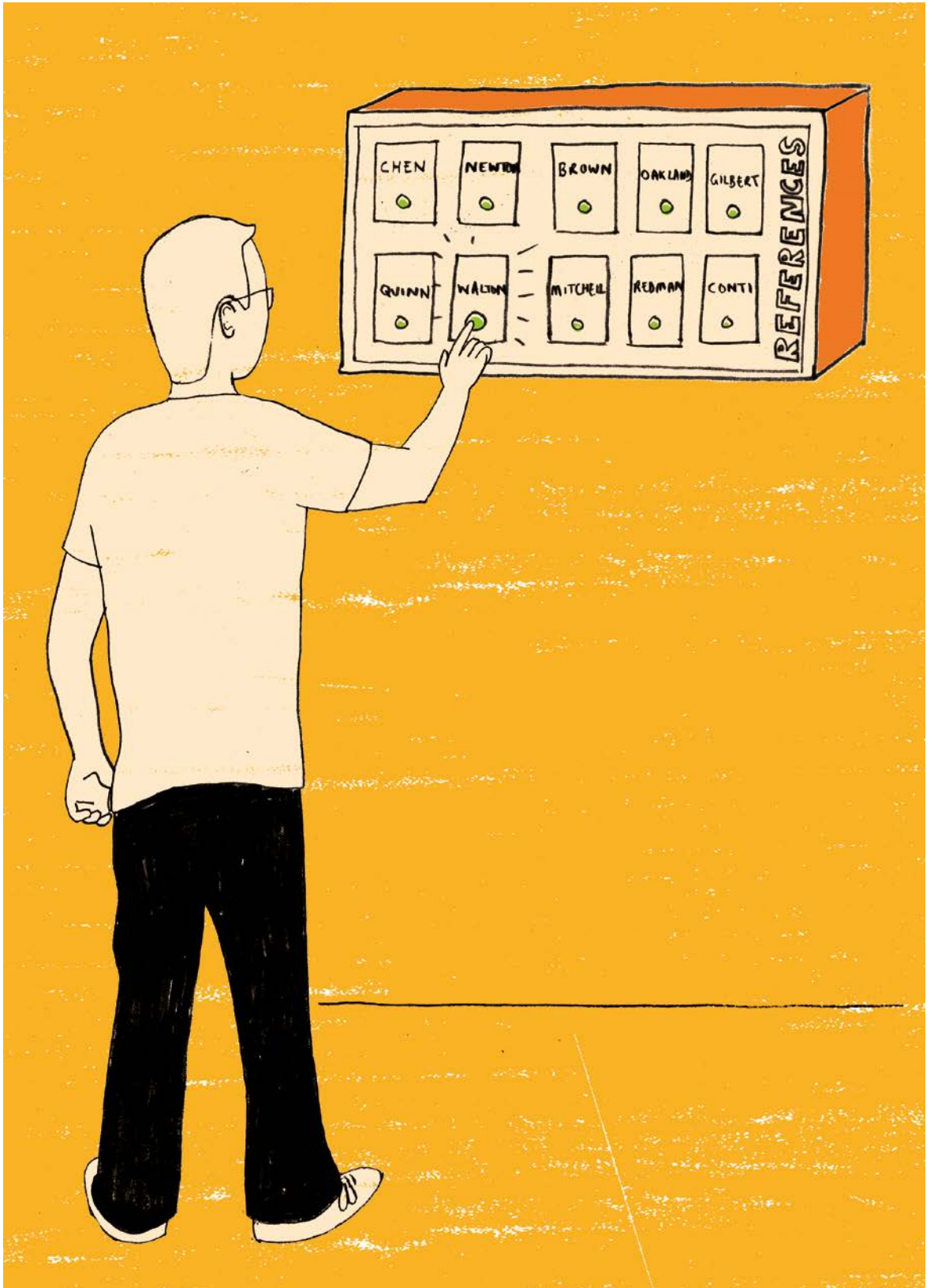
- Using customer satisfaction/loyalty measures, such as net promoter score (NPS) and complaints resolution data, to look with senior management at the most upsetting issues for customers that needed to be addressed in order to enhance reputation.
 - Being able to announce in company annual reports US\$ billions in savings from improvement work led by the quality department as a result of success with chosen improvement programmes.
 - Successful application of good quality management in a project-based business, by clearly articulating at the front end of the project what quality could do, and how it needed to be focused on outcomes, results and how to use resources. Exerting control without being overly bureaucratic – doing this by setting up ownership and governance so that everybody knew how to deliver, what library of systems users were going to go to, and the processes and procedures that they needed to adopt. Setting the level of control that was appropriate to the project scope improved the likelihood that people adhered to it. Good quality professionals do not impose on their project teams, but they make sure that those teams learn how to use and adapt the quality systems to maintain control. It is crucial that quality people demonstrate value and bring it to the business – if you do not do that, you are at risk.
- Real change in attitudes towards improvement, driven by a “CEO Excellence Award”.
 - Quality acting as “curators of the BMS” with process ownership so established that the right people were held accountable and the system was better managed.
 - Becoming the go-to professional, not through selling it to people at the time, but by recognising that it is important to just do things in a quality way every day.
 - In the NHS and other areas, use of statistical analysis and reduced clinical variation has helped to improve patient experience and has led quality professionals to an understanding of the need to:
 - o work through people and influence the senior team, ie deliver value to them;
 - o complete good stakeholder management to understand who influences whom;
 - o not be seen as one disrupting and holding back the business, but rather as one who is taking it forward;
 - o not be seen as naysayers or “risk merchants”, or as people who just carry negative news or are critics, but people who find solutions.
 - Getting in early when reviews are done; we know the pain and may have to accept a slap on the wrist, but get in early, give warnings and help managers to avoid pain, understand the politics, understand the realities and work within them.

The CQI will continue to keep members and stakeholders updated at [quality.org](https://www.quality.org)

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