



ASQ Calgary  
[www.asqcalgary.org](http://www.asqcalgary.org)

## Certification Preparation Practice Makes Perfect

By Jim Armstrong

I would like to thank the following members:

- Fiona Koether
- Wang Lee Lau
- Maria Stoletova
- Carmelita Grest

for earlier this year, participating in the panel discussion on ASQ examination preparation.

The panel stressed the significance of taking an ASQ certification examination. Obtaining the certification is indeed an accomplishment, but more important is the effort you take to learn more about your chosen profession. In an age where knowledge is key it is surprising to read that (sorry about the US numbers):

- 1/3 of high school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives.
- 42 percent of college graduates never read another book after college.
- 80 percent of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year.
- 70 percent of U.S. adults have not been in a bookstore in the last five years.
- 57 percent of new books are not read to completion.

So if you are taking the time to read primers and other books related to a certification you are part of an elite group of the population!

Now for the pointers:

- The primer is most important. This contains the information on the body of knowledge for your chosen examination. The Quality Council of Indiana or ASQ both offer primers for the various ASQ certifications.
- Purchase the exam bank questions and

practice!

- Mark or tag your reference material as you will not have a great deal of time to go looking for information.
- Try all questions first and answer as many as possible. If there is a challenging question, flag it and move on. Come back to these questions after you have tried the others.
- Time management is important. Divide the time you have available for your examination by the total number of questions to calculate how much time you have per question.
- Arrive 30 minutes in advance of your examination time so you can organize your area and get your materials ready. This will also give the exam proctor time to examine your materials and calculator.
- Make sure not to bring example questions to the examination.
- Bring two calculators just in case one fails during the examination.
- Bring plenty of HB pencils and a good eraser.
- Bring a driver's license or some other form of Government Issue ID.
- If you can, take a prep course. Our chapter of ASQ is trying to set some up for 2010.

When I was preparing to write my certification examinations I set up the Quality Discussion Group (QDG) so we could have a forum to prepare to write the examinations. I actually patterned it after the SQDG that had been running a couple of years prior. The QDG has evolved into the discussion group we have today. For next year we may actually set up some sessions to cover specific common areas in the various bodies of knowledge. This will be complete with practice questions. Last but not least do try and enjoy the learning experience!

## Quality Paper Competition Winner

Jeff Rosaine was awarded first place in the ASQ Calgary 2009 Quality Paper Competition. His winning entry titled "Adding Value to Internal Audits at AIT Canada" is reproduced here.

In many organizations, internal audits simply involve observation, telling people what they are doing wrong, and then leaving until it is time for the next audit. This is how Internal Audits were done at AIT Canada when ISO registration was first achieved in 1996. But over the years the system has evolved, mainly out of a need to justify costs, so that each audit adds more value to the business activities.

### Background

AIT Canada has 35 branches currently registered to ISO9001:2008 in two divisions (Bearing & Transmission and HyPower Systems) spread throughout Western Canada. Typically each branch is subject to one audit each calendar year. Currently there are four qualified auditors on staff, although one person normally does each audit. All audits involve an on-site visit, although portions can be done in advance.

### The Process

The purpose of the internal audit is first and foremost to identify deficiencies, and recommend Corrective Action. A comprehensive 50-page checklist is used, which follows AIT's Operating Procedures Manual. And the audit process involves a combination of observation, review of records and direct questions to the staff responsible for areas being audited. None of this is different from most other audits.

But there are differences, and this is where the value-added section comes in. Examples:

1. An increased emphasis is put on the positive aspects of the branch's Quality Management System, and overall business operations. It is one

thing to identify problems and deficiencies, but it is also important to recognize good business practices, so those things will be repeated. These items are in the audit report as positive re-enforcement.

2. Rather than issuing Findings for each and every system violation, items that are minor in nature or easily fixed are recorded on a supplemental audit report, the List of Observations. The point being that people shouldn't be bogged down with fixing minor things, but concentrate on more important issues, which are documented as Findings. Also, included in this report are suggestions on better ways to do common or problematic processes. The auditors have the advantage of seeing how things are done in several locations and they share this knowledge.

3. On-the-spot Training. When an auditor discovers someone doing a process incorrectly, they temporarily transform from an auditor to a trainer. They show the individual how to do the process correctly, and make sure it is fully understood before moving on to the next item on the checklist. The deficiency is still noted as an Observation or Finding, but it is easier to fix the problem on the spot than to put it in a report and have it addressed by someone else days or weeks later.

### Score Card

AIT's Top Management sponsors a Quality Award competition. Branches are judged on many different Quality-related criteria and the results tabulated on a running scorecard. Audit performance makes up 20% of the overall total. Scores are tabulated by subtracting points for Findings and minor system violations. Positive aspects earn additional points. This has proven to be a great motivator in getting people to take quality matters more seriously and better prepare for upcoming audits.

Additional Training

Training makes up a portion of the audit process. In addition to the on-the-spot training, before the audit each Branch Manager is contacted and provided with a list of different training modules they have the option of putting their people through. Topics include: The Cost of Quality, Operational Efficiency, the Corrective Action Process and Collecting Customer Feedback. Auditors also use this training as an opportunity to sell the system. Training concentrates on why it is important to use the quality tools, such as Customer Feedback and Corrective Action, and provides examples where they have driven significant improvement. An emphasis is put on how these devices and practices will improve your bottom line, not just result in a better audit score.

Statistical Proof

The Audit techniques at AIT Canada have achieved positive results. The following charts show steady improvement from year to year in the audit scores for both divisions. A better audit score means the system is used more effectively, which translates into better customer service and more internal efficiencies. This has a positive and significant impact on the bottom line.

HyPower Audit Scores	
Year	Avg. Score
2008	14.4
2007	14.0
2006	13.3
2005	12.5
2004	12.5

B&T Audit Scores	
Year	Avg. Score
2008	15.9
2007	15.4
2006	15.5
2005	14.9
2004	13.7

But do the people at the branch level realize the value they are gaining from these audits, or is it still seen as an extra hassle and additional work? We

survey all branches after the audit. Below are questions pertaining to the audit process and the branches' response over the last two years.

The results of the audit reflected the situation at my branch		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	25.4%	17
<b>Agree</b>	67.2%	45
Disagree	6.0%	4
Strongly Disagree	1.5%	1

The information from the audit, including the audit report, will help my branch improve		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	16.7%	11
<b>Agree</b>	72.7%	48
Disagree	10.6%	7
Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0

Conclusion

The numbers in the charts suggest that not every location has fully bought into the audit system and embraces the auditor when he arrives on-site. Still, compared to the early days of AIT's QMS, they do represent a lot better attitude and willingness of the people at the branch level to work with the auditor and heed their advice. People no longer fear and dread the audit. It serves as an opportunity for branches to fine tune their business practices and do it in a manner that will make their operations run more efficiently. This will lead to improvements that benefit the staff, management, customers and accountants.

Training makes up a portion of the overall audit process. In addition to the on-the-spot training, about a week before the audit, each Branch Manager is contacted and provided with a list of different training.

## Membership News

The ASQ Calgary Executive is in the early stages of planning for an ASQ Calgary Annual General Meeting to be held in September 2009. The exact date and location are still to be finalised.

ASQ members who are in transition between jobs may apply to have their annual membership fee deferred. The application for this member benefit is included as the final page of this newsletter.

If you missed our annual dinner and the presentation "Oil and Gas Supply Chain Quality", the presentation notes are now available on our web site [www.asqcalgary.org](http://www.asqcalgary.org)

## Quality Discussion Group 2009 –2010 Schedule

"Starting in September and running every other Wednesday until June 2010, with a short break over Christmas, ASQ Calgary hosts Quality Discussion Group meetings. These meetings are free and open to members and non-members. We are currently working on our 2009 – 2010 schedule. Topics put forward so far include;

- Internal Audits OR Cost of Quality
- Japanese Management / Kaizen
- Economic value of ISO standards
- Lean
- Six Sigma (methods/tools)
- Problem solving/ RCA (human factors)
- People factor in quality
- FMEA
- Process definition
- Customer satisfaction (measurement/ improvement)
- Change management



**consulting  
training  
auditing**

**Next Training Course:**

**ISO 9001 Internal Auditor**  
(*\$645 plus GST*)

July 22 – 23, 2009 Edmonton  
July 29 – 30, 2009 Calgary

- ◆ **ISO 9001 & 14001**
- ◆ **Partnerships, COR (Health & Safety)**
- ◆ **Operational Efficiency**
- ◆ **HAZOP Facilitation**
- ◆ **Drawing Updates**

\* 10% off for ASQ Members

Suite 310, 3115 – 12 Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7J2  
T 403-221-8077 F 403-221-8072 [www.sdsconsulting.ca](http://www.sdsconsulting.ca)



## ASQ Calgary Year End Dinner Meeting

By Tim Yaworski



The 2008/2009 year came to a formal close on 3 June with the year end dinner meeting at the Canadian Danish Club. The event was well attended and the presentation on Oil and Gas Supply Chain Quality given by Joe Varghese with Suncor Energy was very well received.

Joe has several years of experience related to manufacturing, construction management, quality management and supply chain management. He shared his learnings related to quality management with major projects.

- The highlights were that for major projects the following areas need to be considered
- Take a balanced quality assurance (QA) – quality control (QC) approach and specifying QA – QC requirements upfront
- Use a Risk Based approach for Supplier / Contractor Management
- Ensure Quality Tools are used appropriately

- Ensure additional checks and balances are in place for International procurement
- Establish Risk Based Audits and Surveillance
- Ensure effective communication and Key Process Indicators are in place and managed

Overall it was a very informative and great networking event. Our thanks to Joe Varghese for his excellent presentation. Thanks to all the organizers of the dinner with a special mention of Wang Lee Lau, Program Chair, for pulling the event together. We look forward to you attending the next event in the fall.

## Certificate Exams

ASQ Calgary is pleased to announce the first round of preparation training for ASQ certification exams. Starting in September, our section plans to offer the following preparation courses:

- Certified Quality Auditor
- Certified Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence
- Certified Quality Engineer
- Quality Improvement Associate

For more information on cost, schedule and to register email,

[education@asqcalgary.org](mailto:education@asqcalgary.org)



# Unemployment Program Application

This benefit applies to members who want to retain their membership, but have difficulty renewing because they are currently unemployed. Membership dues are \$129 for current Full (formerly Regular), Senior, and Fellow members. Participating members receive a discount on their membership renewal based on consecutive years of membership:

- Receive a 50% discount if you have 1-4 consecutive years of membership. You must complete your first year as a Full member before applying for this option.
- Receive a 100% discount if you have 5+ consecutive years of membership.

### Criteria

1. You must be a Full (formerly Regular), Senior, or Fellow member.
2. Any years as a Forum or Division, Associate, or enrolled student do not qualify.
3. You may submit this application only after being unemployed for **at least 90 days**.
4. You must be actively seeking employment.
5. Retired or self-employed members are not eligible. ASQ offers a similar benefit for retired members. Please contact ASQ to request an application for the retirement program, item B0488.

### Benefits

- Your **basic membership dues** for the current membership year will be paid or partially paid by ASQ. Basic membership dues exclude additional Forums or Divisions, journals, and additional Sections (Seniors and Fellows—you keep your extra benefit of choice).
- You may participate in the program for no more than two years in your membership lifetime. You must complete an application for the second year of participation.

After renewing your membership, please visit the Career Services area of [www.asq.org/career/](http://www.asq.org/career/) to search for jobs, apply for positions online, and post your résumé for employers to view.

## Unemployment Program Application

Member No.		Years of membership	
Name			
Address		City/State/Zip/Postal code	Country
Home phone	E-mail	Last date of employment	
Previous employer		Industry	

### Please select the discount that applies:

- 50% dues discount.** After your discount, basic membership dues are \$64.50 for Full (formerly Regular), Senior, and Fellow members.
- 100% dues discount.** Your basic membership will be renewed at no charge.

**IMPORTANT: If you are applying for 50% dues relief, you must submit your payment along with this application to cover the remaining portion of your renewal.** Return completed application to ASQ Customer Care. To determine your consecutive years of membership, refer to the "Member Since" date located on your membership card.

### Payment Information

- Check enclosed
- Please charge my credit card (MC, VISA, AMEX)

Card number	Expiration date
Name of card holder (print)	Signature

If you need to request another membership card or verify your years of membership, please contact ASQ Customer Care at: phone: 414-272-8575 or 800-248-1946, fax: 414-272-1734, or e-mail: [help@asq.org](mailto:help@asq.org).