Towards a global cyber institute – Part 2

"New times demand new measures and new men;
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' day were best;
And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we."

J.R. Lowell
A Glance Behind the Curtain.

Introduction

Part 1 of this article attempted to describe some of the shortcomings of traditional bricks and mortar based national quality bodies, BAMs. This Part 2 contains a number of suggestions about how a cyber-based, global quality institute might be set up and operate. One stresses the suggestions represent the author's thoughts and are certainly not presumed as "set in stone". It would be for those wishing to be founder members to determine the actual framework and *modus operandi* that would be changed from time-to-time as deemed necessary. The suggestions might make my ideas for a new Institute appear inchoate at this time. That is to be expected as it is important the founding members decide on what they want: it is *their* Institute, not mine.

Contents

The following topics are addressed:

- o   A platform for the Institute
- o   Objects and purpose of the Institute
- o   Name for the Institute
- o   A possible structure and membership requirements for the Institute.
- o   Governing rules.
- o   Membership dues.
- o   Local national interests.
- o   Language.
- o   Articles for the site or for the Library or Reading Room.
- o   Business sector matters.
- o   Headquarters.
- o   Training courses and certififaction.
- o   Conferences.
- o   Registration schemes and registrars.
- o   Developing international standards
- o   How to get the cyber Institute going.
- o   How you can help to build membership.
- o   What does the membership want?
- o   In what ways would the cyber Institute be different from the BAMs?
- o   A respectable goal and a goal of respect.
- o   Appendix 1 – Register of volunteer assistants.
- o   Appendix 2 – Your views about a cyber based global quality institute.

A platform for the Institute

"Platform" might not be the apposite expression in this age of cyberspace. Perhaps "portal" may be more appropriate. However, since the new Institute requires something of a base membership as well as a portal for their inter communications, "platform" will be used.

Either the Cove, or Saferpak, or both in a merger might offer the platform for the new cyber institute. Indeed, Marc Smith and Simon Timperley deserve considerable praise for their efforts and investments in creating their sites. Neither of those two sites has reached the full, exciting and awesome (in the true sense of the word) potential it has. At this stage, the future goals and strategies of those two are not known and may be inconsistent with the needs of a new Institute. And, of course, one cannot presume either would wish to take the necessary steps to provide the platform. There are other candidate hosts and contenders, though.

Naturally people currently working in the quality world might ask whether or not one or more of the existing BAMs might wish to become the host. A few moments spent reflecting on their past and present features and services, though, would reveal there are a number of arguments why it does not appear any of them would be suitable, at present. A fuller discussion of that is inappropriate at this juncture.

Objects and purpose of the Institute

Simply these:

- o   To globally encourage and facilitate the creation and exchange of knowledge and information concerning quality management.
- o   By confirming grades of membership, to acknowledge the contributions and involvement of individuals and companies in that creation and exchange.
- o   By awarding certificates of accomplishment, to recognize individuals who have attained world-class levels of knowledge and achievement, as prescribed by the Institute, in applying tools and techniques used for quality management.
- o   By awarding certificates of conformity, to recognize trainers who provide courses that embody world-class curricula and are delivered competently, as prescribed by the Institute.
- o   By awarding certificates of conformity, to recognize organizations that apply quality management and business improvement practices to an extent prescribed by the Institute and verified by individuals or organizations deemed competent by the Institute and acting on behalf of the Institute.

There may, of course, be others added by the members as the needs of organizations and their effective management reveal over time.

Name for the Institute

The members would determine the actual name by ballot. Any member can propose a name to be included in the ballot. Once determined, it is not envisaged the name would be subsequently changed.

The name should succinctly reflect the global reach and purpose of the Institute. Of course, it is not essential that the word "institute" should even be included: it is being used at this stage as a matter of convenience for this article. Other possibilities might include: academy; association; society; fellowship; organization and so forth. Adjectives might include: world; international; global; intercontinental – whatever. And, even "quality" may be inadequate. Alternatives might be: business improvement; business management; or quality management. One cannot be prescriptive at this stage but combining some of those expressions one might arrive at: the world society for the advancement of quality management; or the international institute for quality; or the global association of …etc. (Naturally, one would need to search to ensure no other organization exists by whatever name is proposed.)

One might even be brief, calling it "The Quality Management Institute" or "The Quality Institute". (Similar to "The Glenlivet", for those who know something of the history of Scotland's single malt whisky industry!)

A possible structure and membership requirements for the Institute.

The basis for membership must be visible and available to all. Suppose the following:

- o   An institute where knowledge and contribution are what counts most and first.
- o   Membership is based not primarily on academic achievement but on noted and publicly available contributions to the field.
- o   The highest grade of membership requires the person to post a serious article about business improvement efforts and results – every year – to be made available in the cyber Institute's Library or Reading Room to other members.

Very egalitarian, one hopes.

Though academic achievement is nice and indeed might be instrumental in securing a job offer, employers and clients (of consultants) look for achievement and track record. The latter tend to dominate interviews and are certainly highly influential. Companies want to know what has the person achieved, what are they likely to contribute. (I will not stray into the minefield of psychometric measurements and so forth.) Once a person starts a job, academic qualifications tend to mean little: results matter more. Moreover, in an increasingly globalized world, knowledge of what is happening in one's chosen profession is important.

Hence, one cannot dismiss the potential effect of a professional qualification conferred by a global institute for a contribution acknowledged by an international panel of eminent people within that institute.

An eminent panel

Eminent professionals should *guide* a professional body. For certificates of accomplishment or accolades to be issued, there should be a number of people chosen for their contribution to the profession who are the final arbiters on candidates' achievements.

In the case of articles submitted by someone wishing to be known as a Global Contributor, each submission should undergo assessment by an international panel of noted experts/ gurus or contributors to the cyber institute before acceptance for posting. So that the highest grades are regarded as prestigious and deserved, it is important that the particular panel and "Board" do not dilute the required standards or compromise in their application.

> Side Bar: The principle of non-dilution is important because people who reach a particular grade must know that later applicants will not be judged by lesser standards so that the integrity of their grade is maintained. If anything, and in the interests of continuous improvement, the panel should constantly raise the standards by which submitted articles are judged. It should not be possible for applicants to plead they are any special case so as to influence the panel for self-seeking purposes that damage the standing of the particular grade of membership.

Though this matter requires further discussion and agreement, it would seem there might be the following "grades" of membership:

- o   Global Contributors.
- o   Participating Members.
- o   Corporate Members.
- o   Visitors.

The actual titles and grades would be determined by ballot of members at the outset. For present purposes, those titles will be used. And now, some ideas concerning how the various "grades" of membership might work:

Global Contributors

The new Institute should encourage and recognize contributions to the knowledge bank of the Institute. The Institute's Rules should require that each person wishing to be known as a Global Contributor must submit at least one article for the Institute every year. That article must be of at least, say, 3000 words in length. A panel of eminent and prominent members would review that article, for content and suitability. An article accepted for posting in the Institute's Library or Reading Room would then earn the grade of Global Contributor for its author. The article's topic would be at the discretion of the applicant but must relevant to the profession. As examples, the writer may describe certain aspects of her employer's quality program or continuous improvement achievements, or a practical paper on a matter such as product recall or supply chain assessment.

Each year's article must not repeat a topic previously covered by the applicant in earlier years.

Conventional posts on the Institute's site, however frequent or lengthy would not be regarded as articles unless the post is the text of an article already accepted by the panel and posted in the Reading Room or Library.

For the individual, this would entitle them to be regarded as a Global Contributor and to show to his or her employer evidence of accomplishment as judged by a panel of international peers: not as a person who merely "writes a check" for the letters after the surname. The articles would be posted in the Institute's Library or Reading Room.

The path to Global Contributor is then open to anyone who has something relevant to offer, regardless of academic achievement. It would value knowledge, experience and contribution above all else.

So, those who do practice their profession, who have actually done something at their place of work for the benefit of their employer or client could be globally contributing members. Sheltering behind academic qualifications would not be enough. Those not holding academic degrees could earn the same professional status by virtue of their workplace efforts. And the common remarks that *"all you have to do is pay the fees"*, would not apply to that particular grade of membership. Moreover, the route to this higher grade would depend not on the period of membership or on a HQ shoving through, say, a fellowship for the ulterior motives of politics or convenience or election of "safe pairs of hands" to controlling boards and committees: it would be earned and retained only through acknowledged contribution.

Whether the employer is large or small and regardless of the country in which it is situated and operates, the contributor would receive equal treatment and international recognition.

Crucially, as the Institute expands and grows in reputation, the title "Global Contributor" should have some special cache, especially as viewed by employers and clients.

Other articles, free speech and avoiding elitism.

While those types of articles are for acceding to the grade of "Global Contributor", the Institute's site would still accept other articles that would not be reviewed by the panel. People would be free to post articles without reference to the panel. In that way, the Institute would ensure free speech and exchange between members, much as happens in the Elsmar Cove, Saferpak and similar sites today. This should prevent any suspicion of elitism and also ensure the Institute operates differently from the current BAMs which employ reviewers and editors who can filter or edit views, as described in Part 1 of this article. All such articles would be subject to the "*Governing Rules*", describer hereunder.

Participating Members

These are dues paying members who have not contributed to the Institute's Library/ Reading Room or who have failed to maintain their status as Global Contributor. They could participate in the various discussion forums, posting their views and questions. They could also apply for the grade of Global Contributor by submitting an article, as described above.

Corporate Members.

Companies may wish to identify themselves with the new Institute, especially because it is global in its membership and constituency, non-discriminatory. In return for support the firm could have access to the site, the Reading Room etc., nominating an individual or individuals as its representatives. The Institute might also provide a free hyperlink to the corporate web site and allow it to post job vacancies or requests for quote.

Corporate members would be required also to post at least one article per year dealing with its quality efforts and achievements, rather as those who win the Baldrige Award are required to make available material about how they achieved their results.

To become Corporate Members, the organization would be required to submit such an article at the outset, to preclude the possibility it merely pays a year's dues and offers nothing to the Institute's bank of knowledge.

Recruiters would be regarded as Corporate Members and required to pay dues in order to post positions available and search for applicants' details in the Membership Database (see below). This would present no hardship for recruiters, as employers reimburse their fees, if their proposed candidate accepts a position with the employer.

Visitors

These are people who pay no dues but are entitled to take part in the chat rooms and threads, rather as at present on the Cove and Saferpack but cannot have access to the Library or Reading Room, member forums and inner threads reserved exclusively for the paying members.

Membership lapse or downgrade

If a Global Contributor does not post an accepted article within a 12-month period of his/her last post, membership would be downgraded to "Participating Member", provided the dues are paid up to date.

If a Participating Member does not pay annual dues, membership will be reduced to "Visitor" and access to the Members section and associated privileges denied.

Similarly, if a Corporate Member does not pay its annual dues, membership will cease.

Since the Institute is database driven it should be easy to send an email or PM reminder about paying dues and to automatically downgrade or lapse membership, according to the above circumstances.

Membership database

For the purposes of assisting employers or recruiters know of a member's status, the Institute could have a searchable section that would cite the member's name, contact details, history of grade of membership, contributions made, other publications and papers of note, certifications, date when the member joined the Institute and a brief bio limited to, say, 200 words. Contact details would be viewable subject to the member's permission.

Governing Board or International Panel

It should be for the members to decide whether or not they feel such a "Board" is desirable. For the Institute to be respected by the world of business, though, it would seem advisable for the members to require one and to set up one. If so, a framework for the Board might be as follows:

o   The title (Board, panel, whatever) is, of course, open to debate and resolution (ballot) by the members at the outset. By whatever title it is known, it should be comprised of people selected for professional standing by contribution to the quality profession's BOK, judgment, geographic location and sector of activity.

o   These people should be practicing quality professionals.

o   The prime role of the "Board" would be to ensure the Institute sets high standards for certificates, curricula for certifications and courses. Those standards would be set to "stretch" applicants giving them a true sense of achievement if successful and to ensure the standards set are world class.

o   The emphasis should be on informality.

o   No member should receive any payment for being a member of this body.

o   The "Board" should be empowered to decide on issues of membership, discipline and conduct by members of all grades. Their ruling concerning membership lapse and removal would be final.

o   The "Board" would elect its own chairperson for a period of, say, two years.

o   It would not be empowered to increase its number without a ballot of the Institute members.

o   Institute members would be able to nominate and vote for "Board" members. Candidates must meet preset criteria concerning their known contribution to the profession's BOK and experience as a practicing professional.

o   "Board" membership would last for, say, 2-5 years and existing members would be eligible for re-election.

Though at the outset the "Board" members might not be Global Contributors, as described below, each would be required to submit an article for the Institute within the first 6 months of their appointment such that they would be regarded as Global Contributors. Failure to do so would mean that person relinquishes his or her position as a "Board" member. Subsequently each Board member would be required to be Global Contributors and meet the requirements for maintaining that status.

Hopefully, the "Board" would be drawn from all continents and as many nations as practical to be representative of the global market in which members work. It is anticipated the maximum size would be, say, 12. A suggested geographic representation might be:

o   North America or NAFTA.
o   Europe or EU.
o   Middle East.
o   Indian sub-continent.
o   Asia.
o   Australasia.
o   Central and South America.
o   Africa.

"Board" advisers

Considering the nature of the quality profession and its attendant industries, the "Board" may decide to appoint a small number of *ad-hoc* advisers when dealing with prominent areas of interest for members. These people may well also be Contributing Members who also moderate particular Forums. Preferably, they would be persons "of international standing". A list of such advisers might include:

o   Registration (i.e. a registrar.)
o   ISO 9000 (perhaps a member of the TC 176 committee).
o   ISO 14000. (ditto.)
o   Special areas, such as software, auditing, six sigma.

     o   Business or management associations.

The panel of experts that review applicants articles (see *Global Contributor*, below) might be separate from the "Board", but membership of that panel approved by the "Board".

Governing rules

Though the new Institute may set "Rules" for membership, maybe as described above, the emphasis should be on as much informality as possible and an absence of "bureaucracy".

Beyond requiring proper courtesy and respect for others and prompt payment of dues, there really does not need to be much else apart from a willingness to contribute to the profession, help others (when possible). Naturally expressions of racism, foul language and bigotry would be impermissible as would libelous remarks, copyright theft and similar. Personal promotion and advertising in posts and threads, other than those known to be reserved for advertisements and hyperlinks, would not be permitted.

Discipline and control

The moderators would be empowered and required to apply the rules, remove offensive posts or, in extreme cases, recommend loss of membership.

> Side bar: A free-for-all does not occur on the Cove or Saferpak. Marc and Simon both intervene when things start to go to far, or unprofessional conduct occurs. Those disgraced can be and have been "banned" from the Cove. The Cove also has its moderators who also intervene and ensure orderly conduct and debate. Censorship? Yes, when obscenities are posted, the site software automatically scrubs-out the offending text, but that is consistent with professional behavior and the dignity of the site. One needs to participate for only a few days to realize there is a good degree of fairness, tolerance and courtesy in the way the posters (contributors) behave.

Naturally, if one accepts the presence of moderators acting as coordinators, they could easily ensure discussion heads towards an objective and resolution. They could bring matters to a head with a free vote poll on issues, on approvals and so forth.

And they can ensure the various threads are carefully organized into categories and topics because at the heart of the system would a database management system.

Members' voices will be heard and will count. The moderators and other members will ensure that. So, any contribution will not be suppressed or edited, provided it meets the test of courtesy etc. already mentioned.

Membership dues

In reading this Part 2, this is probably the section to which some people scroll first. Did you?

Not everyone can afford the high level of dues currently expected by the BAMs. Fees extending into three figures especially disadvantage emerging nations' citizens. And, since the new Institute does not need a white elephant temple to bureaucracy (i.e. a HQ building), it would seem the annual dues could be far lower. Moreover, by using modern IT, members could pay by the quarter or month using credit card and direct debit if they wish.

So, for an institute having truly global reach, not a national priority, affording the kind of communication speed for the dissemination of knowledge and solutions etc. described in this article would $25 p.a. be too steep? In most cases that is unlikely. Would not employers be more inclined to reimburse fees of a more modest level than exist at present in the BAMs? And, if so, would not this encourage more people to be

members, thus tapping a greater body of experience and knowledge than is presently the case? But, others must decide this matter.

And, considering the current advertising rates demanded by the BAMs for their paper-based house magazines, which reach well into 4 figures per month, corporate members would probably be willing to provide, say, $500/ year. In return they would receive global reach for people working in the quality field, a hyperlink to their site and the right to briefly describe (up to, say, 200 words) their products and services in a searchable database kept on the Institute site. Moreover, the pure value of the downloadable material is well in excess of that figure for, if it was necessary to hire in people to provide or create it, the associated bill would be far higher.

Thus, one suggests the following dues, which reasonable people should admit represent exceptional value for money in comparison to those currently levied by the larger BAMs:

Founding members		Voluntary contribution first year; $25/ year thereafter.
Forum moderators		$0/ year in which they serve, unless already paid
Participating Members and Global Contributors,	$25/ year.	
Corporate Members		$500/ year

There should be no additional dues for "registering" one's membership.

The current practice of the BAMs of charging more for fellows, senior members and so forth is without merit as the holder of such title receives little if anything more than the ordinary members.

Forum moderators should not be required to pay annual dues, in recognition of the constant effort and contribution they make to the smooth running of the Institute. If they wish to make a contribution while they serve as moderator that is a matter for their own discretion.

Similar remarks apply to Founding Members, for the first year of the new Institute during which they will be probably spending a considerable amount of time and effort coordinating activities, organizing national or special interest groups and getting things going. They are, of course, at liberty to make whatever contribution they wish to help fund the Institute.

Payment of dues

Dues could be paid on-line by credit card or by phone call + credit card. Checks should also be welcome. The Institute must ensure its software gives the highest level of security to prevent members suffering identity theft or other forms of loss.

Why are dues necessary?

An institute of the type under consideration does need computers, servers and various kinds of support. If either or both of the Cove and Saferpak become the platform, one cannot expect Marc and Simon to provide the accommodation and expensive equipment, running costs, heating, lighting, air conditioning, maintenance, software licenses, upgrading and replacement, installation, technical support and troubleshooting etc. for free. Though much on their sites is free, an Institute is about sharing not freeloading. In the fullness of time, some downloadable materials obtained later by the Institute and which are useful in quality management may be available but only at a cost required by licensing agreements. It is not possible to predict how the internet may develop.

It is hoped that revenue surplus to requirements would be used to provide grants or scholarships for students wishing to study quality management at *bona fide* further educational facilities, recognized by the Institute as offering a curriculum acceptable to the Institute.

What do I get for my money?

From existing quality bodies, not much: posts on existing internet sites claim as much. The new cyber Institute could be run for, say, $25/ year membership (whatever the figure, but far less than at present). It is worth repeating, at that price, what exceptional value for money for the practicing professional! It may attract those many able people in the quality field who cannot afford the present high levels of dues. Membership (Participating or Global Contributor) would entitle one to read the posted papers and articles, download useful materials from a central library. Corporate Membership could be provided allowing downloading of materials and access to knowledgeable people. Non-subscribers could use the cyber site as a blog as at present in the case of Elsmar Cove and Saferpack: they would not enjoy the benefits of the subscribing members.

Local national interests

There seems no reason why the new Institute cannot set up sub-sites or threads dealing exclusively with local, national matters. A page for the Brits, one for the Norwegians, one for India, one for China, or Singapore, or Brazil, or Egypt, or Australia etc. Each could have its own moderator working in accordance with the Institute protocols and rules.

What is important is that regardless of where the main host site is situated, say, in America or India the new Institute is not regarded as a primarily single nation endeavor. One of the Cove's and Saferpak's strengths is the participation of so many non-Americans and non-Brits: all are welcome and all given equal respect. Such values must continue and prevail. Jingoism and petty nationalism can have no place in a global Institute.

And, simply because the Institute works primarily through cyberspace, there is no reason why local people cannot run face-to-face meetings which could be promoted on the Institute's site by means of newsletter or equivalent and reported on in the same way. Setting up such an institute does not mean face-to-face events need be a thing of the past: far from it.

Local meetings

Many ASQ sections have web sites. Problem with most section meetings is they tend not to be well attended: 10% of local membership is often regarded as a good turnout. The topics might appeal to a few and are insufficiently wide ranging. The new Institute can also have local sections and host their own chat rooms. The Elsmar Cove, for example, is an incessant section meeting.

Naturally, if locals wish to foregather in a pub, hotel, café or whatever at regular intervals or whenever, there is nothing to stop them. And is it not a saving that instead of one's institute HQ demanding money for a list of one's section members, that would be for free as all would be on the database? The members could opt out of notification, adverts, flyers and so forth, thereby knowing their names and details are not being distributed or sold and their privacy will not be intruded upon if they so wish. Privacy already exists at the Cove and Saferpack if you choose. From my experience BAMs take scant notice of my preferences not to receive solicitations and junk mail at my home or office.

The possibility of *ad-hoc* face-to-face meetings is also greater. Place a post, state the time, place and topic. Visiting from out of town on business, doing an audit, assessing a supplier, don't want to be hotel-bound? No problem. Post where you will be, meet up, enjoy a drink and chat together. That is real networking and it is already happening.

Language

The Cove and Saferpack both use English as the prime language for communications. But, there really is no reason why national moderators should not also encourage threads in local languages. However, the moderator would need to be fluent in English as well and ensure the Institute's rules for conduct, courtesy, libel and so forth are adhered to.

Moreover, in posting an article in the Institute's Reading Room or Library, the author might be required to give permission for it to be translated into other languages solely for posting on the Institute's site while retaining copyright.

Articles for the site or for the Library or Reading Room

Every year, around the world, hundreds of articles and papers are submitted to the BAMs for house magazines, conferences and newsletters and to unattached publications, such as *Quality Digest*. Many never get published for one reason or another. Those that do may only receive local, national exposure. Other nationals are unaware of ideas and experiences of different nationals. So, there is a wealth of material available if the Institute can encourage membership.

It is impractical and costly for anyone working in "quality" to subscribe to all the magazines available around the world. It is better if a global Institute can make available in a single place the knowledge and experiences of others working in the quality field.

Currently, people submitting material to their national BAM might not get the global attention their work deserves. The new Institute can remedy that situation.

Business sector matters

Interest in quality and business improvement matters is spreading into sectors far beyond manufacturing, the origin of the old BAMs and much of the present day BOKs. As is the case for local national interests, one cannot see any reason why particular sectors should not also have their own set of pages, threads or whatever. Since sites such as the Cove are data based, setting them up (I am informed) is a relatively easy task. And, it is always interesting to know what are the problems, experiences, solutions and BOKs for different sectors and professions. Such is the nature of "cross fertilization" of ideas.

As examples: how does "accounting" go about quality management, continuous improvement and so forth? What about the health care sector? Or biotechnology? Or nanotechnology? Or financial services? Or government? And, since many sectors also have their own smaller versions inside corporations, would not encouraging their involvement be good for all companies and organizations? As an example, every organization has people working in human resources, sales, finance: a sector section devoted to each of those may well be of interest to one's colleagues in those departments – especially if the organization believes in TQM or is pursuing six sigma (business improvement) programs throughout.

And so, because the cyber institute would be database driven, there could be "sector" pages/forums. As examples: software; electronic products; oil; aerospace; biotechnology; pharmaceuticals; food; nuclear power; microchips; civil engineering; retail; healthcare; biotech; nanotech; HR; banking and insurance, and so forth. Each sector forum would have its own moderator(s) and threads posting news, encouraging discussions on relevant matters and quality management problems and solutions for each.

A particular beauty of a cyber-based institute is that no one month needs to be devoted to a single, special issue – not that such things are tedious. Expecting special interests to wait their turn in the BAMs house magazines does seem inconsistent with a fast changing world where solutions are needed in short spaces of time. Our new, cyber Institute could offer a superior service in that respect.

Better still, one of the problems conventional quality departments have experienced is in getting the attention of, say, HR or finance and offering solutions. Making available to them such an institute cannot possibly damage the quality profession for it would become more respected as a body that can offer solutions and improvement suggestions, useful tools and techniques tailored to special departmental needs.

The Institute will gain in reputation according to its perceived usefulness to management of all disciplines, levels and sectors.

Special interests

These might include such topics as: reliability engineering; six sigma; costing and accounting; auditing; quality management; business strategy; registration; ISO 9000 and similar standards' development and issues and so forth. Such interests tend to be somewhat generic for many economic sectors, as tools and techniques are often universally applied. In fact, there is a considerable number of threads already on the Elsmar Cove, for example, that might be re-arranged under agreed macro titles, such as just mentioned. Within each special interest area, members can be encouraged to offer articles and effectively create their own periodic "newssheet". In getting the Institute started, volunteer members might assist in designing a new structure and sorting the various threads.

Headquarters

The BAMs provide secretarial services for administrating membership, collection of dues, running the web site, selling courses and materials, collecting, editing and publishing articles for the house magazine, selling advertisements, arranging courses and so forth.

As stated in Part 1 of this article, the core material comes from members time, effort, experience and largesse. Volunteer members run all sections, divisions, branches, regions and work groups. HQ might post minutes, reports and so forth, but that, too, is merely secretarial work. The associated input is generally the result of the volunteer member efforts anyway. All such material can easily be uploaded to a web site for all to see. And it can be done quickly requiring no special skills. Cut, paste and post are skills known now by four-year-old children.

In a new cyber based Institute, there would be a certain amount of administrative work. Most can be done through information technology. As mentioned, dues can be paid on-line; reminders can be automatically emailed to members; knowledge materials can be ordered on-line; reports of local meetings posted by members. Maintaining and running the servers does require centralized human activity. Most of the rest does not. And since members are already willing to spend time doing the essential work for the BAMs, why should one believe they would not do the same for their new cyber-Institute?

If the new Institute is to have a HQ, it would be where the servers are sited and maintained. Otherwise, the operational HQ rests within thousands of PCs and laptops of the members, dispersed around the world.

One might ask "could a cyber-based Institute also coordinate courses, curricula, training providers and so forth?" There seems no reason why not and the possibility is allowed for in the suggested *"Objects and purposes of the Institute"*, section, above. So that matter will now be discussed.

Training courses and certification

Courses of many descriptions, some concerning "quality", are available through the internet. The number and variety are growing. Professional people will likely want bachelor or master degrees in "Quality Management" in future and these are now readily available on line from accredited universities. Some employers acknowledge such certificates as the ASQ's CQE, CQM: others do not, as posts on the Cove reveal. At technical level, the latter certificates are easily made available through the internet as well and a new cyber based Institute could offer them or approve providers that do.

The new Institute could easily set its own BOKs in various fields. It could easily run its own training courses through outsourcing similar to what exists at present. It could also issue certificates. Volunteer work, why not? That is the foundation of existing BOKs and certificates anyway. And it could be substantially cheaper than at present.

For particular certifications, each might have its own "eminent" panel, curricula internationally agreed and embracing world-class practices, tools, techniques and knowledge. Basic BOKs already exist that were created by quality professionals: these could be quickly reviewed, upgraded and published. The panel could decide whether or not training organizations applying for recognition or outsourced services to the Institute meet the Institute's prescribed standards for delivery and conduct of certification training courses.

Major corporations wishing to run their own internal courses could also apply for recognition.

Examinations could be periodically held, run by volunteers, as at present in the case of the BAMs. The volunteers would receive recognition for their efforts and assistance.

"Grandfathering" should not be permitted.

Conferences

Conferences have become primarily cash cows and content is generally of secondary importance in which HQ people have little if any interest.

Conferences tend to be constant repetitions of worn out themes that might interest and impress newcomers to the quality movement but seldom do anything to stimulate more experienced people. The quality world's "demography of experience" is constantly skewing towards greater numbers of seasoned quality professionals and practitioners: for them worn-out themes and mundane presenters lack attraction.

> Side Bar: In 1995, I tried to advise an ASQ chairman that the demographics of the quality movement and especially auditors was changing. I observed the balance of numbers would inevitably swing towards experienced people being in the majority. Thus, conference content had to change and rookie tracks and topics must become a minority part, if the real market of auditors was to be tapped in coming years and their interest in participating was to be retained. I suggested a number of cutting edge topics requiring discussion: I am still waiting. A recent (2005) conference organized by the EOQ, held in Turkey, had a disproportionate number of papers by academics, committee people and so forth. The poor content failed to convince me spending on transatlantic travel, hotel, attendance fees *et al* was a good investment.

> I have also repeatedly suggested to the ASQ's Quality Audit Division that it should invite speakers from countries beyond the USA. That still does not happen to a substantial extent and the event tends to be predominantly American in terms of speakers. In an international world, that is a pity.

> But, it does not take long for one to spot the regular presenters. In a global world, where the BAMs and registrars try to make much about the international level of interest in "quality", the pool of good talent is considerable.

In the case of the ASQ, as I understand it, volunteer members organize the division conferences, assess and select venues, negotiate contracts with the chosen location, design the sessions and tracks, vet and choose submitted papers, organize the transactions, deal with sponsors and advertisers, choose keynote speakers, create the copy for advertising brochures and web sites, stuff the delegates' conference bags with transactions, act as track chairs, register delegates and undertake any number of duties needed for thee smooth running of the events on the day. I am informed HQ people do comparatively little and what they do could also be done by volunteers or automatically using IT.

One is hard-pressed to know what an HQ could offer except, perhaps, a legal entity that can provide hotel venues with a guarantee of funds and an address for contractual purposes. A properly organized cyber institute, too, could provide that.

Why do people attend? So often I hear them say, *"I only really come for the opportunity to network"*, or *"I like to meet old friends each year"*. Networking can be effectively done through the internet and other means of communications: social events are a little different.

Present day conference promoters organize registration, credit card payment of fees, articles submission and so forth using the internet, as could the new Institute. Conference proceedings could be downloaded from the Institute library for a fee if one does not wish to attend. After all, we are only discussing various applications of digital technology as most conferences currently provide attendees with a CD anyway.

If a cyber institute wants to run a conference, everything is available – especially the experience – for doing so. All that is needed is for those members of BAMs who are experienced in running conferences to join up and take the lead. More importantly, a cyber institute's conference could be a world event held anywhere: its members can create the necessary teams – internationally – coordinating their efforts through email etc.

The cyber Institute's conferences might occur on line, using video conferencing facilities. They could even be conventional ones. What would be different would be the level of conference fees. Remove the costs associated with the BAMs HQs "efforts" and its expectations of a considerable share in the profit or a license fee for using its name and there may be considerable savings.

Registration schemes and registrars.

Neither the accreditation bodies nor auditor registration schemes offer anything a cyber-based Institute could not. Indeed, the latter could do more.

Diligent registrars ought to salivate at the prospects of the new Institute becoming also the international accreditation body. Auditors and training course providers ought to do likewise. Registrars want to reach as many actual and potential customers as possible. They spend vast sums of money advertising their services in monthly house magazines. The new Institute can offer hyperlinks at a fraction of the cost. The Registrars could become Corporate Members, as described above. Being businesses they naturally want to go where their customers are: they want exposure. There is no sound reason why they should feel any nostalgic loyalty to the BAMs. Rather, to the BAMs HQs and secretariats for they are *not* their customers, merely middlemen and intermediaries extracting their price (mark-up) for providing an advertisement placement service for house magazines to attract the *real* customers.

Is an advertisement in a house magazine read? Maybe. But a click on a hyperlink records actual interest and impact.

The diligent registrars also know they are frustrated by some who do not maintain high standards of performance, if one might politely describe the problem. They would probably welcome Institute members being able to post their experiences of registrars for it would soon sort out the wheat from the chaff. There would be an incentive to maintain high standards of performance for that is conducive to growing their business.

Members' experiences of registrars

And, the cyber-based Institute could easily set up a secure site in which members could post their real views and experiences of registrar performance, perhaps naming names. The Institute could also list approved firms, details of CARs issued, names of certified auditors. It is all being done using IT anyway, so the Institute could soon provide such a facility.

Members setting the rules for accreditation and registration by the Institute

If the members determine the rules they want, they can mandate accreditation by the Institute if the registrar wants their employer or client's business. At present, the RABQSA and IRCA enjoy that franchise by default since it predates the present day internet capability. As the Institute gets under way, individual members can specify that requirement thereby guaranteeing it will be supported. (What is new in that? It was the members of the BAMs that promoted and endorsed the RAB, IRCA and others. In any case, competition is healthy and a new cyber-based scheme would be good for that.) Since it would be based on international consensus, there can be little fear of the scheme being hijacked or used as a cash cow by local interests. In the end, that should guarantee fees would also be reduced – an attractive proposition that would raise the value for money registrars, auditors and users receive.

Naturally, it would be especially helpful if a few prominent companies, such as Ford, GE or Merck would lend their support. But, as their own employee quality professionals advise their management, one might soon expect such endorsement to be forthcoming, provided those people join the Institute. It would be somewhat strange, though, for any prominent company that claims to be global or international in outlook and operation *not* to support a global institute once it is aware of its existence. And, through the immediacy and reach of the internet, members can always post the fact that such a company is not interested. Members are also customers of company products.

For nearly twenty years there has been considerable dissatisfaction with the actual or perceived level of service provided by registrars and the accreditation schemes. One can reasonably extrapolate the unrest to assert the existing committees and rules for governance are unsatisfactory. In setting up a new global cyber Institute, the opportunity for resolving the causes for that dissatisfaction are patent.

The Institute can determine its own eminent, experienced people charged and entrusted with the effective operation of such schemes. They would be immediately available for comment and counsel. Comments, suggestions and irritations could be publicly posted and dealt with. And, registrars could be publicly admitted to the register – miscreants publicly "struck-off".

Perhaps best of all, since the members would be more directly involved in the accreditation/ registration process, they would get an opportunity to set up a scheme that addresses the causes of so many complaints about registrar effectiveness and service over the years. Their feeling of being personally remote from the process, as if an unheard voice, can be alleviated. If the scheme reduces the present disaffection and "noise" surrounding company registration, registrar performance and roles, it will make a substantial contribution to the quality profession and its service to business.

Developing international standards

At present the Cove has various people intimately familiar with, say, TS 16949 or the working of the ISO TC 176 committee. Indeed, some of the Covers are registrars, members of such committees and so on. They can, do and could contribute important knowledge on such topics.

There is no reason why the TC 176 committee should not be invited to do its work openly using the facilities of the new body. At present, their only substantial means of reaching the international community to gain participation in the standards' review process is through the BAMs and the ISO site, neither of which could be described as vibrant or vital in the debate.

Moreover, as membership of the BAMs dwindles, ISO is less likely to feel it issues "quality standards" that truly reflects the global constituency of its customers and users, for they are unlikely to be BAMs members or contribute. Even more importantly, if such standards are needed, the quality movement does need to know the end results is representative of the global opinion, experience and needs of its customers – the businesses it serves as employees, consultants or registrars. Could it be there is a correlation between the growing dissatisfaction with current ISO 9K (and other standards) and the falling membership of the BAMs? (I suspect some academic with little else to do will investigate that possibility, now that I have suggested it!)

There is no reason why a new ISO 9K should not be developed using the new Institute. Throw open the doors of the "smoke-filled committee rooms" and let those whom will use the standard, buy the standard and be responsible for its credibility and progress have their say in a public forum where all know their views will be seen, cannot be censored or swept under the carpet – dismissed because they are not in accord with the opinions of a mysteriously appointed few. Make the process transparent. Our cyber Institute would ensure the end product is better, that reasons for dismissing suggestions must be justified. Call the idea consensus or professional plebiscite as you wish. Actually, it is market opinion.

If the software community can develop Linux using the internet, why cannot the quality profession develop its own standards, which are far less technically complex or demanding?

That statement is intended as a direct challenge to standards' committees.

While one cannot dispute the committees and TAGs enjoyed a close relationship with the BAMs over the years, their loyalty must be first of all to the profession they wish to serve. As the world moves on and the professional body's business model changes to something new, those committees must work with the new one. In the case of America, for example, why should the new cyber institute not invite and welcome its TAG members and chairman? Why should that chairman not be invited to run a section of the site to help his TAG's work and communicate with members?

Would any TAG chairperson be foolish enough to turn his/ her back on such an invitation and opportunity. And, the overall TC 176 committee and ISO itself, a presumably non-aligned, non-political entity, would surely frown if he/ she did. And, other nations' TAGs could be invited to do the same. After all, the International Quality Institute (if that might be its name) would be precisely that: international.

How to get the cyber Institute going.

Naturally, it would be a process of evolution and the final shape may not be apparent for some time. The problem, though, is that it would require effort by members and dedicated people.

As is always the case in life, there are those who will grumble and those who will put hands to the oars. From the outset, the Institute needs the latter. *Appendix 1 – Register of volunteer assistants* contains a suggested table that might be posted on the new Institute's web site to which volunteers could respond detailing the nature of assistance they are willing to provide.

The founding members would review the offers and set-up teams as appropriate, regularly posting details of their decisions and progress made.

How you can help to build membership.

Even if you cannot yet write an article for the Institute, you can be an advocate by emailing your contacts and encouraging participation at some level or other.

> Side bar: Most Covers and Saferpackers know a good number of people interested in quality who are not currently members of the traditional societies. Maybe the dues are too high, the services poor or irrelevant. Membership can be rapidly grown by each of us emailing such people. Given the speed and reach of email the collective "address book" is beyond the wildest dreams of the traditional institutes who will only SELL you the (relatively paltry) list of addresses and names they have. Thus the potential membership and rate of growth could be staggering.

You could encourage your firm to support the endeavors by becoming a Corporate Member. You might even prepare your registrar for the possibility that, in the fullness of time, if the Institute also sets up an accreditation and registration activity, you will be selecting registrars meeting those forthcoming

requirements determined and internationally agreed by the Institute. The members would be involved in making proposals and voting on their adoption for running such activities.

There are many things an individual could do and feel rewarded about in helping to set up a truly international Institute that reflects the profession's needs, experiences and views. Contributing by paying dues to buy and set up the necessary equipment and software etc would be appreciated and welcome. Contributing articles for the Library or Reading Room would show a degree of support as would posting comments and views on the "inner threads".

What does the membership want?

How easy that is to discover. On the one hand the constant posts are a census on topics of relevance and concern. On the other, the members can start a thread saying, *"This is what I need for our Institute"*, and list their requirements and specifications for the particular service. And they can quickly coordinate an action team to address those matters. Far more vibrant than present day "professional bodies", and completely devoid of the possibility a HQ will sit on its hands or file the request in the round file.

The resources to do what is needed are available immediately and without the need for HQ appropriations committees, budgets and approvals. In any case since volunteers often have to do the real heavy lifting, what is new? The Cove and Saferpak are all about volunteers – as would be the new institute. So too are the BAMs. As mentioned elsewhere in this article, without volunteers the BAMs would collapse in days.

In what way would the cyber Institute be different from the BAMs?

Though it may seem the suggestions made above merely reproduce such organizations there are fundamental differences. Among others:

o   Apart from those involved in maintaining the servers etc., there would be few if any HQ staff.
o   The Institute would not be national (parochial) in character. It would bring together people working in the quality field around the world and have no individual national identity.
o   It would ensure any member could raise or discuss any topic and post an article on any topic without interference or editing. It would give greater degree of freedom of speech than exists with current BAMs. Individual contributions would be known and recognized.
o   The global depth and breadth of its body of knowledge would be greater than any individual BAM. The speed with which important topics, problems and solutions could be presented to the international membership is far greater than at present.
o   The Institute's discussion and voting processes would be transparent.
o   Local, national political or civil services' influences or appointees would not covertly guide it.
o   It could be portal based using an existing platform such as the Elsmar Cove or Saferpak.
o   Its membership levels would be give people international status based on a contribution acknowledged by the international membership, thus removing arguments about the comparative worth of individual national memberships.
o   Its certificates would be based on world-class curricula agreed by the international membership. This would ensure candidates would "stretch" to achieve them and also remove arguments about the comparative worth of individual national schemes.
o   Its registration/ accreditation schemes would do likewise.
o   Members of a global Institute would better serve business and its global supply chains by being better informed and having an Institute that embraces the foregoing points.
o   Its fees could be far lower than those of the BAMs.

A respectable goal – a goal of respect

The reputation and international standing of people working in quality management would be better achieved through a cyber Institute than through national BAMs. And, eventually, company management would begin to appreciate what mean the letters MIQS (to use the Part 1 example of a name), what they stand for.

Respect, though, must be earned: it cannot be commanded. That means the members of whatever grade need to deliver the type of applied knowledge benefiting their individual organizations, be they employer or client. It also requires the Institute to adopt rigorous standards for achieving its highest grades of membership and conferring its professional certificates. Ensuring world-class standards and preventing dilution of standards (the widening of goalposts) must be impermissible. There will always be some folk who want to take shortcuts or an easy path out of self-interest at the expense of their professional community. It must not be allowed or tolerated.

Respected institutions attract an ever-higher caliber of person in turn raising the prestige of being a member. Well-written articles and helpful contributions attract interest and further high-quality contributions from experienced and eminent people. It is a natural part of human nature to want to be associated with reputable organizations: recognition by a prestigious institution is valued.

It will take a little time for the Institute to develop and gain respect. How long depends on the efforts and involvement of its members: you. It is a rare opportunity for an international community of ordinary people, such as us working in the quality world, to develop something of real benefit to the world and for individuals to be able to actually see their contribution communicate throughout the world. The internet gives us that and it would be folly not to grasp that opportunity and move ahead. Those that help will feel a sense of achievement: no amount of assistance given by any individual (world citizen) could be regarded as too small.

As indicated in this article, different countries, different continents and different economic sectors, different processes (accounting, purchasing, logistics) could all have their own set of pages and threads. Cross-fertilization of best practice and viewpoints would be readily enhanced by the Institute's site's search facilities. And the Institute could produce its own type of "Wiki" encyclopaedia concerning "quality", available for the members.

Interested? Be a volunteer to start our "qualitypaedia" or any of the other services our new Institute could provide the international community. Respond to Appendix 1 and help to move your profession into a new age.

<div align="right">
Allan J. Sayle,
President
Allan Sayle Associates
20 May 2005
</div>

Appendix 1 - Register of volunteer assistants

If you are willing to assist in setting up and running the Institute, please enter your details in the register below. None of this data will be offered to third parties. Its sole use will be for internal Institute purposes. All entries will remain strictly confidential.

One stresses that registering at this stage does not commit you to join the Institute. This canvass is for the prime purposes of ascertaining the level and type of active volunteer support that may be available in getting things going.

Personal profile	
Name (First name, surname):	
Email address:	
Current user name:	
Country of residence:	
Phone number:	
Educational qualifications:	
Professional certificates (e.g. CQM, Auditor etc.):	
Current or past membership(s) of national quality institution (e.g. IQA, ASQ):	
Current or past activities (positions held) for national quality institutions:	
In what languages can you write well or fluently speak?	
Which of the following would you be willing to do for the Institute	
Act as a moderator:	
Be part of a special interest group, (state which):	
Assist in organizing or running local, national section, (please state locality, country):	
Assist or run periodic face-to-face meetings in your locality. (Please state the locality.)	
Assist in organizing or running a forum for a particular sector's interests:	
Assist in organizing or running a forum dealing with a particular Body of Knowledge, BOK, similar to CQE, CQM, CQA etc. of the ASQ (State which):	
Assist in organizing or running qualification schemes, similar to the above. (State which):	
Assist in running or organizing the Institute registration and/ or accreditation schemes:	

Assist in coordinating the Institute's interface with ISO and members' contributions to ISO standards:	
Contribute articles or a "column" on a regular basis for posting in the Institute's Reading Room or Library:	
Translate articles posted in the Reading Room or Library into local languages. (State which languages.):	
Arrange for your company to become a Corporate Member:	
Other. (Please describe in less than 50 words.)	

Appendix 2 – Your views about a cyber based global quality institute

Question	Yes	No	Comments
Would you wish to be a member of the global quality Institute?			
Would you like the Institute to offer grades of membership?			
Would you like Corporate Memberships to be available?			
Would you prefer the Institute to be a portal?			
Would you like the new Institute to award professional certificates similar to CQE, CQM etc?			
Would you like the new Institute to set up a new scheme for accrediting registrars and certifying auditors, companies?			
Would you like a section for special interests e.g. biotech, food, electronics, services etc?			If yes, please state the special interests.
Would you like a section devoted to your country?			If yes, please state your country: