



QP's New Voices of Quality
represent the
next generation of leaders

by QP Staff



WHEN QP SET out to find the individuals who will give a voice to the new generation of quality professionals, one of the hopes was that the group's makeup would lend insight into what the future holds. And if the final list of 40 is any indication, that future is rife with opportunity.

Of course, there are the engineers you would expect from any gathering of quality professionals. But the inaugural collection of QP's New Voices of Quality also includes vice presidents, professors and physicians, among others. And, perhaps most encouraging, they hail from many different parts of the globe, fitting for a feature published during World Quality Month.

Our search for the most accomplished, promising and devoted quality professionals under the age of 40 started by asking readers to nominate friends, colleagues and even themselves via an online questionnaire.

After gathering the responses, we enlisted ASQ's Young Quality Professionals (YQP) Network. Its selection committee scored the nominees in three categories:

- **Personal story.** Is the nominee honest and impartial in serving his or her employer, customers, clients and the general public?
- **Professional achievements.** Does the nominee strive to increase his or her own competence and prestige, as well as

that of the quality profession as a whole?

- **Community impact.** Does the nominee use his or her knowledge and skill for the enhancement of human welfare?

The committee scoured the nominee forms for evidence of activity in these areas and returned with a list of 40 individuals under the age of 40 who exhibited the characteristics you would expect from the best and brightest in the field.

The 12 nominees who received the highest scores are profiled in the following pages, and the sidebar "More Voices" includes a list of the remaining 28 New Voices of Quality, whose profiles can be found by visiting the QP website at www.qualityprogress.com.

On our website, you'll also find an audio interview with Lori Dellinger, cofounder of the YQP Network, as well as links to the network itself and a blog entry from ASQ CEO Paul Borawski about the New Voices of Quality.

So dive in and get to know the individuals who will help shape the future of the profession.

MORE VOICES

In addition to the individuals featured in the print edition, you can find profiles for the other 28 nominees selected as QP's New Voices of Quality by visiting the QP website at www.qualityprogress.com:

Adila Afzal
Jessica Andreshak
Bill Bradley
Tyler Brush
Brandon Cole
Lori Dellinger
Nada El. Jeshi
Laura Freeman
Veronica Gonzalez-Bosch
Nunki Hartel
Talal Hisham
Evan Holloway
Tim Kamps
Matthew Krupinski
James Love
John Priebe
Nicole Radziwill
Julio Rodriguez
Keshia Seitz
Zeeshan Siddiqui
Michael Simister
Lillian Smereczynsky
Nergis Soylemez Sayed
Francisco Tamayo-Enriquez
Brandon Theiss
Anshuman Tiwari
Himanshu Trivedi
Nital Zaveri

JIM AKERS QUALITY ENGINEER ROCKFORD, IL

Jim Akers knows a thing or two about customer service and customer satisfaction. And he wants to make sure everyone around him knows about it, too.

“Some people like to just complain about a service they received,” Akers said. “I try and provide an understanding to the business of how the error occurred and what steps they can take to reduce the risk of the error occurring in the future.”

The 38-year-old quality engineer has plenty of opportunity to practice this message at Woodward Inc., which designs, manufactures and services energy control systems and components for aircraft and industrial engines and turbines. But Akers also makes sure he preaches it.

He handles customer quality for Woodward Inc.’s largest customer, so he knows what it takes to anticipate customers’ needs and keep clients happy.

“I use quality tools and concepts to make a difference by

working very closely with our customers to see how we can improve and provide more value to our customers,”

Akers said. “Our customers specify value, but as a good supplier we must introduce improvement ideas before the customer asks for them.”

That outlook and philosophy goes beyond just the job. Akers, who is an ASQ-certified quality engineer, reliability engineer and Black Belt, shares his knowledge through his numerous teaching stints at universities and colleges in Illinois and Wisconsin, incorporating valuable employment skills into the curriculum so his students aren’t completely blindsided when they enter the workforce.

“I especially look forward to showing how traditional quality concepts can be applied to the service industry and everyday home life activities,” he said.



JONATHAN ALTAFULLA QUALITY ASSURANCE COORDINATOR MIRANDA, VENEZUELA

Jonathan Altafulla knows firsthand how quality can have a direct impact on people’s lives.

As a quality assurance coordinator for pharmaceutical company Quimbiotec, Altafulla plays an integral role in ensuring Quimbiotec’s products, many of which are derived from human plasma, are safe and meet quality standards.

“One of my most significant professional achievements—since I work in the quality area—was having to take responsibility for contributing to the quality of drugs that have a direct impact on the health of the population,” said Altafulla, 35.

“It was really important to transmit to the staff of the organizations where I work the importance of quality, the responsibility we have to our patients to provide quality products, and that each of us with our respective activities plays a key role in achieving quality standards. Quality is not the responsibility of a small group of people within the organization, but for all its members.”

Altafulla, a member of the quality management system implementation team and the validation system manager, not

only promotes quality and related activities within Quimbiotec, but also throughout Venezuela. He also participates in quality-related courses and conferences.

He was one of the first people in Venezuela to become an ASQ-certified quality auditor, and he researches “the latest developments in regards to quality to ensure that, despite limited resources, our organization maintains the highest standards of quality,” said Lucy Cordido, Altafulla’s supervisor, who nominated him for QP’s New Voices of Quality.

And he doesn’t just strive to see quality in the workplace. “All the concepts and tools of quality are applicable at work and a personal level. Use quality for your daily life, and live your life with quality,” Altafulla said.

“Be an example of a quality person, and make a difference. This will provide a model for others to assume the quality and philosophy of life.”



DANIEL BHARADWAJ VICE PRESIDENT OF QUALITY JAMESBURG, NJ

You could say Daniel Bharadwaj has grown up in quality. In his 16 years of professional experience, 38-year-old Bharadwaj has gone from being an entry-level professional to a vice president of quality. In this role, he builds and leads quality teams that help implement quality and performance improvements in organizations that didn't have formal programs.

Along with his professional accomplishments, Bharadwaj, vice president of quality at Billtrust, makes an impact in the quality community by coaching and mentoring quality professionals everywhere from ASQ section meetings to ASQ's World Conference on Quality and Improvement.

"Daniel is a humble, yet great coach in sharing his quality knowledge with his staff," said Zancesca Spagnoletti, a former colleague of Bharadwaj. "He is a senior member of ASQ and has supported membership in ASQ for his team, and encourages them to pursue quality certifications for their own career growth and development."

In the future, Bharadwaj sees quality becoming increasingly important, and he plans to keep up by becoming an ASQ fellow and traveling globally to teach quality at educational institutions, professional conferences and seminars.

"[Quality will become] more critical to life as technology-driven products and services are increasingly integrated into human lifestyles, including embedding devices in human bodies," Bharadwaj said.

"Customers will ultimately influence the results of quality initiatives. Social media will be harnessed to showcase the impact of quality. Governments and corporations in developing and underdeveloped countries will embrace and support more quality initiatives to improve standards in products and services, and formal degree programs in quality management will be integrated into educational curricula."



SAMEER CHOUGLE QUALITY ASSURANCE HEAD ARDIYA, KUWAIT

Being one of QP's New Voices of Quality would seem to imply that an individual wants to spend his or her entire career in the quality field. Sameer Chougale doesn't subscribe to that notion. In fact, he wants to take it a step further.

Asked how he thinks quality will evolve in the next 25 years, he said, "Quality would no longer be called quality. I foresee quality becoming an embedded part of the core process and not a separate control process. Every employee will be responsible for his own production, run it through quality control twice and forward it to the next process in line. The quality checklist would be a well-researched, stringent one, leaving little room for error."

Chougale is certainly qualified enough to predict such an outcome. In his relatively brief career, the 32-year-old quality management system (QMS) consultant and quality assurance unit head at Combined Group Contracting Co. has helped six companies in Kuwait earn their ISO 9001 certifications.

Beyond that, he has preached the benefits of waste reduction via technology in a region of the world that is "not

so personal computer-friendly." Those efforts are also evident inside his organization, where Chougale tirelessly advocates for QMS improvements in the face of "countless hurdles."

He also promotes the use of quality tools, particularly the plan-do-check-act cycle. "It helps process owners understand their processes in parts," he said.

But his ultimate goal is to extend quality's reach into the daily routines of every worker who wants to perform at his or her best. "My dream is to set up a training institution for the benefit of quality aspirants, to whom quality would be taught using extremely simple quality tools and techniques blended with technology," he said, adding that the possibilities extend even beyond that.

"I would like to be more vocal on issues related to quality than I am able to be right now. There is an intense need to spread the word of quality in the local community as much as there is a need to perform quality in organizations."



JASON HAWKINS VICE PRESIDENT, LEAN AND SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER OKLAHOMA CITY

As vice president, lean and special projects manager at First Fidelity Bank, Jason Hawkins' career revolves around quality. But it's his ability to apply quality initiatives for change and improvement in other aspects of his life that truly makes Hawkins noteworthy in the field.

"Quality tools guide me into unconventional areas," Hawkins said. "Taking away the stigma of 'we've always done it that way' is done by using quality principles and strategies."

For the past 10 years, the 35-year-old Hawkins has focused his work in the financial services industry on creating efficiency in internal and external business processes. His recent accomplishments include developing a lean program at First Fidelity Bank.

"The goal is to enrich the culture to a level that demonstrates a commitment from all employees and an acknowledgement from management of the value of the changes," Hawkins said.

Still, he doesn't confine quality to just his workplace. He

is also a U.S. Soccer A-level licensed coach and serves as the assistant director for the Oklahoma Soccer Association, where he uses quality tools to grow the resources for the organization.

Hawkins says implementing quality standards affects more than 50,000 youth soccer players who pay membership fees to their local club. Strategic planning helps to maximize the association's income, and results in improved service to the youth members. In the future, Hawkins' goal is to show others the value of teaching quality and allowing that foundation to guide decisions.

"I strive to develop strategies that make a lasting impact on the people they touch," Hawkins said. "I am mindful of the challenges that come with implementing change, but I'm steadfast in the belief of the principles. The foundation of quality development is to teach rather than do."



MOHAMED HELALY ENGINEER DOHA, QATAR

As an international representative in quality, Mohamed Helaly said he believes that in 25 years, quality and continual improvement will be at the forefront of all production and service businesses.

"I believe that quality will be the most important and dominant sole feature in all business areas," he said. "With strong worldwide competition among nations to expand their share in the international markets, there is no way to survive without making quality a must for each nation."

Helaly, 36, is already well-versed in quality measures as an engineer for Qatar Petroleum in Doha, Qatar. At his current post, he has played key roles in a succession of large-scale industrial, infrastructure and institutional projects, such as oil and gas processing plants, and dams. He has also contributed to efforts in quality engineering and management, safety management project engineering, civil engineering and construction supervision.

"I accomplished my tasks by implementing the best practices in the industry, ensuring effective implementation of

the proper management systems, and adhering to applicable codes and standards," he said.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Helaly holds two volunteer positions—ASQ Country Counselor to Qatar and founding chairman of ASQ's Qatar Local Membership Community. In those roles, Helaly's aim is to help professionals in Qatar gain technical knowledge and skills about quality.

In the future, Helaly hopes to continue his quality efforts in business and in the community, even as the business environment changes.

"Twenty-five years from now, I'll be still working in the quality field," he said. "I'll always be enthusiastic about quality, and I'll keep efforts on integrating quality management systems with all other management systems in my organization. I'll be a fellow member of ASQ, and I'll keep serving the society and its members wherever I am."



JASON KANE, M.D. PHYSICIAN CHICAGO

Jason Kane's leadership has made him a highly effective voice of quality in the healthcare field.

While pursuing a master's degree in patient safety and healthcare quality at Northwestern University, Kane worked as a physician leader at Children's Memorial Hospital, where he initiated programs to improve the quality of healthcare delivered to children, specifically to meet the unique needs of children in the pediatric intensive care unit (ICU).

"Utilizing lean and Six Sigma techniques, I led a team that implemented a novel protocol for the transition of patients admitted to the cardiac ICU following congenital heart surgery," Kane said. "Also, in an effort to improve the outcomes of children sustaining cardiac arrest in the pediatric ICU, I facilitated the development of a comprehensive systematic quality improvement program directed at improving the process and ultimately outcome of pediatric resuscitation."

Since then, Kane's efforts in healthcare quality have only grown. As the patient safety officer for Rush Children's Hospi-

tal at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, where he practices pediatric critical care medicine and is an assistant professor of pediatrics, he is working to create a new hospitalwide patient safety and quality program using strategic quality improvement tools.

He also serves on the Society of Critical Care Medicine's quality improvement committee and is a quality improvement coach. He is currently directing a course on patient safety and quality for medical students at Rush.

Kane, 39, predicts the next 25 years will bring an exponential increase in the recognition and industry acceptance of the value of healthcare quality improvement and patient safety initiatives. "I believe that our generation of healthcare quality and patient safety leaders will dramatically improve the quality of medical care by continuing to design and implement quality and safety initiatives."



JAMISON KOVACH ASSISTANT PROFESSOR HOUSTON

For Jamison Kovach, quality is more than just part of her job.

"My commitment to quality is far reaching," she said. "Since the principles of continuous improvement align well with my personality, quality plays a role in most of the things I do."

As an assistant professor in the college of technology at the University of Houston, Kovach uses quality concepts and tools in her work, and also teaches them to her students as part of their regular course work.

"I am continuously improving my courses and instructional methods for the benefit of my students," Kovach said. "By using the methods that I teach, I actively demonstrate to my students that quality concepts and tools can be used in a wide variety of settings."

In addition to a doctorate in industrial engineering from Clemson University, the 35-year-old Kovach is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt. During the last five years, she has presented research on topics such as experimental design and application of quality improvement methods for organizational problem solving.

"My contributions thus far to the quality field have been numerous, and mostly involve my teaching and research activities in quality engineering and management," she said.

"I am most proud of the more than 600 academic students and 150 professionals I have mentored on the use of quality concepts and tools through my courses over the past five years, and the countless other researchers and practitioners I have influenced through my research publications and presentations."

In the future, she plans to expand her efforts to teach quality improvement methods and problem-solving skills to non-engineers. In terms of research, she'll continue to pursue the link between quality improvement, and learning and knowledge creation within organizations. She also plans to advance quality in practices of mental healthcare and education—areas, she said, that are "sorely neglected" in terms of funding and resources, yet "vitaly important to our society."



ELÍAS MONRÉAL QUALITY ENGINEER TUCSON, AZ

Anybody who doubts Elías Monréal's commitment to quality need only take a look at the veritable alphabet that appears on his business card via his eight certifications—mechanical inspector, quality technician, calibration technician, quality auditor, Six Sigma Green Belt, quality engineer, quality improvement associate and manager of quality/organizational excellence.

That's made all the more remarkable by the fact he served two terms as chair of the ASQ Tucson-Old Pueblo Section; is in the midst of his second term as director of ASQ Region 7, which serves more than 5,000 members; and spent four terms as an examiner for the Arizona Quality Alliance's state quality award. And, most recently, he was elected to serve on the ASQ Board of Directors.

Those posts were most certainly earned by the 39-year-old Monréal, who builds his knowledge base and skills using everything from QP articles to his section's educational offerings. "This is my continuous improvement model, and so far I have

learned how much more there is to learn about quality," he said. "Likewise, I am eager to share my knowledge with others. I am deeply committed to this directive and hope to inspire others to do the same. The alternative is obsolescence and extinction."

Monréal makes it clear he expects the same improvement from the organization in which he has invested so much of his time. By meeting that expectation, he thinks ASQ can be the catalyst to success for everyone connected to it.

"During these tumultuous times, it falls on organizations such as ASQ to optimize services to its members, including networking, certifications, education, leadership opportunities and professional development," he said. "The growth of ASQ is the growth of our collective network. With all our dedicated efforts, we can bring real member value to our section, to our region, to our division and to our society."



NATHANIEL PILAND SENIOR RELIABILITY ENGINEER SANTA ROSA, CA

Quality at the beginning: That's what Nathaniel Piland has advocated—and will continue to advocate—throughout his career.

"I believe the role of quality will evolve to being more at the forefront of organizations, leading product developments from the beginning as partners with research and development," said the 30-year-old senior reliability engineer at Medtronic Cardiovascular, a Medtronic subsidiary.

Piland doesn't just advocate this point, he acts on it, said Catherine Priestley, Piland's colleague who nominated him for QP's New Voices of Quality. "Nathan is successfully shifting R&D's design approach to one of partnership with design assurance engineers to design quality into products from the beginning," she said. "Nathan shares his passion for designing high-quality products by drawing on his foundation in mechanical engineering, test method development and commercial product experience."

Piland experienced the role quality and design for Six Sigma (DFSS) methods could play in product development

when he worked at Becton Dickinson Medical. There, he became one of the first certified DFSS Black Belts and worked to integrate DFSS into the company's culture.

Now, he's driving DFSS principles at Medtronic in the company's own version of DFSS called design for reliability and manufacturing (DRM), looking for ways to mitigate risk in the product development process "and harmonize the method in which product teams approach product development," he said.

Piland also spends time as an internal trainer for DRM at Medtronic. "He ensures that he communicates with the team and our leadership to incorporate improvements to our quality methods and systems across the business," Priestley said in her nomination. "Nathan eagerly identifies improvement opportunities and gladly takes responsibility for ensuring that they are incorporated into our development and training activities."



ASGAR "OZ" RAHMAN DIRECTOR OF QUALITY MADISON, WI

Ask Asgar "Oz" Rahman's colleagues about his accomplishments thus far in quality, and it would be difficult to find an individual who is surprised by his success.

"I recall the conversations he and I shared while he was pursuing his first ASQ certifications, and I was impressed by his earnest ambition to be the best in his field," said Rahman's colleague Denis Leonard, who nominated him for QP's New Voices of Quality.

As the director of quality at Rayovac/Varta Battery Co., the 33-year-old Rahman took charge of the \$1 billion global organization's quality efforts. That's no surprise given his career accomplishments, which include:

- Developing measurement and process control systems for the world's first 15-minute rechargeable battery.
- Leading a Six Sigma cost improvement initiative with a value in excess of \$5 million at Harley-Davidson Motor Co. as the corporate Master Black Belt.

- Building and implementing the quality function from the ground up at three different organizations.

- Teaching hundreds of professionals the practical application of statistical quality tools.

- Consulting on government and military Six Sigma projects. "I have been fortunate to be given high levels of responsibility at a young age," Rahman said.

With an affinity for root cause analysis and statistical problem solving, Rahman uses quality tools to protect the customer and maximize return for the organization by focusing on defect detection and elimination.

"My passion is in the numbers side of quality," he said. "I hope to serve our profession by providing practical tools for quality professionals to express their problems in terms of dollars, rather than just units or percentage defective."



PAULO SAMPAIO PROFESSOR BRAGA, PORTUGAL

For Paulo Sampaio, the future of quality depends on the fulfillment of a simple mathematical expression:

Future of quality = do it well x do it better x do it differently

"One of the reasons why I became a quality professional was a paper written by H. James Harrington in 1986 that I read as an industrial engineering graduate student," Sampaio said. "In that paper, Harrington defined quality as always doing well and always better than the previous time. Those are the principles that support my personal and professional life—do it well and try to improve every day."

The 32-year-old Sampaio works as an assistant professor at the University of Minho and at the Lusitana University in Portugal. He's also a quality management consultant with research interests in quality management.

"My contributions derive from the research that I and my students conduct every day to help companies to better understand and better use the quality concepts," Sampaio said.

"My research is mainly oriented to management systems and related issues, which, in my opinion, are areas where we need more statistical, deeper-oriented studies. With my research contributions and as a quality professional,

I try to help the companies and the society to understand that we will not have a future if we do not have quality, and that the future of quality belongs to us and depends on us."

Sampaio, an ASQ senior member and Country Counselor for Portugal, said he believes it will be important in the future for top management and quality professionals to "use the same language" to fully integrate quality into the organization.

"Quality should be continuously understood, assimilated and implemented, both in public and private organizations," he said. "However, each one of us is responsible to push and pull quality forward, always doing more and better." **QP**



Don't forget to check out the profiles of the other 28 New Voices of Quality at www.qualityprogress.com. You can also share your thoughts by visiting the Young Quality Professionals Network at http://community.asq.org/networks/young_quality_professionals_yqp.