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FMEA

FMEA (Failure Mode Effects Analysis) can be used in many industry sectors and should not just be considered as a technique for use in manufacturing. As an illustration of this, consider its use in software development. In this particular case study we look at an internationally renowned software house that has used it in their software development programme. This company has a reputation for world class quality and this had mainly been achieved through the endeavours of their test department. They used approximately one tester to every two developers. This is considered to be a high ratio for the industry. With this level of testing it is not surprising that the product leaving the organisation was almost bug-free. They also had few customer complaints and few significant calls to their help desk. In this position you might ask what the point of doing a FMEA study is. Well, as you might expect the problem with this level of testing is that the internal costs are very high due to the large number of returns to development to fix issues found in testing as well as the actual time and resource spent in testing. They planned to use FMEA to reduce the testing time without compromising quality.

At the start of the software programme an FMEA was conducted on both the software product itself as well as the software development programme. The technique was used to identify potential risks associated with the programme and the product. Following these FMEAs the project leader was able to identify where to focus the test effort and resource. He determined that it was not necessary to test every aspect of the product functionality. This would reduced the test resource needed and yet should not reduce the quality of the shipped product.

Did events prove this to be the case? Was this FMEA initiative successful? Was the company able to release their next version of the software and maintain the high quality standard with a reduction in testing?

The answer was a resounding yes. The outcome was that even with a major reduction in the testing time the quality was maintained with no significant changes in the number of bugs reported. There was also the additional benefit that project delivery times could be reduced. .

Have any of our readers had any experience of FMEA in unusual industry sectors, we would like to hear from you. Further if you would like to know more about applying FMEA to software development then please contact geoff@qmt.co.uk

Draft Standard for non-formal learning services

A Draft Standard – ISO/DIS 29990 has recently been released. This is a standard on the provision of non-formal learning services. It provides a generic model for quality professional practice and performance in non-formal education and training. To review and comment on the standard visit www.bsigroup.com/draft29990.

Future standard for Utility Bills

The ISO has started to develop a standard that will provide a harmonised and transparent framework for billing utility services such as electricity, water and gas. Its advent was driven by the ISO Committee on consumer policy who noticed that billing makes up a substantial part of the overall consumer complaints against utility companies. The new standard ISO 14452 will provide a market-based and market sensitive approach for dealing with consumer concerns. It should make it easier for customers to read and understand their



bills and verify the accuracy of charges. It will benefit suppliers by increasing customer satisfaction, promoting confidence in service providers and lowering the costs of customer complaints.

For further information, please visit www.iso.ch

New Fire Safety Standard

ISO have recently released a new standard for fire safety engineering. ISO 23932:2009, Fire safety engineering – General principles, contains information on a performance based methodology for engineers that will allow them to assess the level of fire safety for new or existing built environments.

The Chair of the ISO Committee that developed the standard, Joel Kruppa, said “Our goal is to provide fire safety engineering documents for supporting performance based design to:

- Develop engineering design and evaluation methods for verifying appropriate fire safety objectives are achieved
- Contribute to sustainable development with a more appropriate approach than prescriptive regulation
- Standardise necessary verification and validation of calculation models, or other assessment methods
- Elaborate guidance documents for best engineering practice

For further information on the standard, please visit www.iso.ch

The beginning of the end for incandescent light bulbs

New legislation that aims to cut wasted energy and reduce energy bills was agreed by all EU member states last year. There has been a voluntary phase out of old-fashioned bulbs since 2007 and on September 1 2009, the EU started the mandatory phase out of 100W and frosted incandescent light bulbs. The Environment Minister Dan Norris said, “We can no longer rely on light bulbs which waste 95% of their energy as heat. We are glad the EU has put this measure in place to stop the waste of energy and money from old fashioned high energy bulbs. The UK has had a successful voluntary initiative in place for a few years, and now the rest of the EU will follow suit on a mandatory basis. This is great news for people who will pay less in electricity

and even better news for the planet as this will amount to 1 Million tonnes of saved CO2 per year by 2020.”

For more information please see the Defra light bulb page

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/products/lightbulbs.htm

‘Backing Young Britain’

The British government have recently launched a new campaign “Backing Young Britain” that aims to create thousands of opportunities for young people. The campaign provides £40 million to fund over 20,000 additional internships so that graduates and non-graduates can get higher quality work experience as well as a new mentoring network to help young people find their feet in a tough jobs market.

Business Secretary Lord Mandelson said, “Our national campaign to help every young person to find a job, training or work skills and experience is not just a response to the recession but an investment in our future as we build a stronger Britain.”

For more information on Backing Young Britain, please visit

www.hmg.gov.uk/backingyoungbritain

2010 UK Excellence Awards

The British Quality Foundation runs three annual award schemes based around the fundamental concepts of excellence that underpin the Excellence Model. The schemes are;

- UK Excellence Award – for organisations of any size, from any sector. The award entry needs to describe how the organisation addresses all 32 criteria of the excellence model and completing the entry will be made easier by using a specially trained BQF award advisor
- Southern England Excellence Award – a simpler award based around the main nine criteria of the Excellence Model and is open to organisations of any size and sector in the south of England.
- BQF Achievement Awards – these awards recognise exceptional achievement in the key areas of organisational performance.



Applicants must describe their approach in a 1,500 word document.

To find out more information on any of these awards contact sally.green@bqf.org.uk

UK Customer Service continues to Improve

The latest UK Customer Satisfaction Index, which is produced by the Institute of Customer Service, has shown an increase from 72% to 74% since the last study six months ago. The survey is based on a representative sample of 25,000 adults surveyed over the internet. Jo Causon, the Institute's chief executive, said: "The results show organisations are trying really hard to keep consumers satisfied, but we realise from the wide range of scores across the sectors that there is no room for complacency. Striving to offer world-class customer service gives your business the best chance of getting out of the recession sooner – and stronger. Putting customers at the heart of your business improves employee performance, which increases corporate performance and makes organisations more competitive. "We know individuals and businesses have less money to spend and are more careful where they spend it. Research shows that taking customer service seriously can produce 24% more profit. Even a 5% jump in customer loyalty can boost profits by between 25 and 85%."

For more information about the Institute of Customer Service go to www.instituteofcustomerservice.com

Coping with a flu pandemic

A wide variety of resources are available from the Department of Health to help organisations development business continuity plans for dealing with the predicted flu pandemic.

- [National Framework and supporting guidance](#)
- [Infection control guidance](#)
- [Final guidance on meeting the needs of those who are or may become vulnerable during the pandemic](#)
- [Pandemic influenza awareness programme](#)

- [H1N1 swine flu vaccination programme](#)
- [The Flu Pandemic Game: a business continuity training resource](#)
- [Planning for pandemic influenza: guidance for commissioners and providers of social care](#)
- [Pandemic influenza: supplementary information for third sector organisations](#)

For further information, please visit http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/PandemicFlu/DH_065006

NEBOSH Environment qualifications

All staff at QM&T are proud to announce and to extend our congratulations to Mary-Clare Bushell for her fantastic achievement in being awarded this year's Martin Bessant Award for the best candidate in NEBOSH Environment management Diploma.