

# BONZA NEWS

## “Root Cause Analysis—Why Do We Need It?”

By Donna Jarvie

Why, why, why (why, why)? Why do we need to conduct Root Cause Analysis (RCA)?

The answer shouldn't be: “Because ISO says we have to”. If this is your company's response, stop reading now and go back to whatever else you were doing. No company should do anything ‘BECAUSE ISO SAYS WE HAVE TO’. ISO standards are simply tools an organization CHOOSES to use to better manage some aspect of their organization, be it quality, environment, whatever.

However, if your response was: “Because that's the only way to really solve problems”, read on!

Root Cause Analysis, using a selection of a wide-array of tools, is necessary if we truly want to understand what caused a problem, which ultimately assists the organization in effectively addressing this problem (and perhaps others along the way...). RCA is not nearly as complicated or time-consuming as many organizations will have you believe – it takes a clear understanding of the problem, staff who have been impacted by the problem and decision-makers who have the authority to implement a solution. If organizations effectively ran their

meetings, RCA would be a tool more widely-used and become a regular part of monthly management meetings, management reviews, production meetings, etc.

In my experience, the most common ‘root cause’ to not performing RCA is that companies want the ‘band-aid’ fix, which is really only containment. It only addresses symptoms and doesn't require real change in the organization. If organizations were to be completely candid about their problems, they would acknowledge that at the heart of their root cause analysis problems is a lack of, an error in, or a misunderstanding caused by: **POOR COMMUNICATION**.

There are other possibilities that include:

- Arrogance
- Sense of entitlement
- Placing budgetary considerations ahead of quality
- Placing scheduling considerations ahead of quality
- Placing political considerations ahead of quality
- Lacking fundamental knowledge, research or education
- Autocratic behaviours

Organizations struggling with one or more of these issues are similar to the family of an alcoholic who is in denial. Everyone tiptoes

around the problem and will not name it. It is like having an elephant sitting in the living room that no one is willing to acknowledge.

This is why quality is viewed as a fad in many organizations. People hear the quality message, leaders embrace the quality lingo, but when quality principles and methods run into the deeply entrenched dysfunctional belief system in an organization, quality suffers.

Managers turn back to their focus on costs, schedules, political manipulation, arrogance, ignorance, entitlement or a feeling of listlessness. The culture in any organization tends to be self-perpetuating in that managers will select people for promotion whose espoused values and visible behaviors reflect the sentiments of the managers in charge.

Root cause analysis is an essential process for any organization that wants to continue to improve its performance, and is willing to engage in serious introspection and analysis. However, we must be willing to dig deep enough to uncover and consider the beliefs and behaviors that shape an organization's management system in order to achieve the improvements that effective RCA provides.



### QUOTE

“If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing.”

**W. Edwards Deming**

### GOOD NEWS!

14 August 2009  
The Canadian Press

Manufacturing sales rose 1.9% to 39.7 billion in June, partially reversing the 4.9 percent decline seen in May, according to Statistics Canada. New manufacturing orders jumped 18.4 percent in June, the largest gain on record. BMO Capital Markets economist Robert Kavcic said the improvement in the manufacturing industry “largely reflects a rebound from extremely depressed levels”, but it does point to better days ahead.



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## “Putting Your Internal Audit System on Steroids” A Workshop with Mike Micklewright

**Wednesday, October 7, 2009**

**8:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.**

Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre  
700 Hespeler Road, Cambridge, ON

Course Fee: \$495 +GST

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**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2009**

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### SUMMARY

Too many internal audit programs within companies are very weak and do not accomplish the very purpose for their existence – continual improvement of the effectiveness of the Quality Management System.

Understanding this weakness and understanding the spirit behind ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 are the first steps in strengthening your Internal Audit System. Toughening up your auditors and strengthening management’s support of the Internal Audit System is the next part.

### TOPICS COVERED

- Seven Habits of Highly Effective ISO 9001 Compliant Companies
- “Easy Audits – The Downfall of ISO 9001”
- Why Internal Audit Programs Are Not Very Effective
- Auditing for Compliance and Effectiveness
- Relationship Between Lean and Preventive Actions
- What does ISO 9001 Also Require?
- What does ISO 9004 suggest?
- Toughen Up Your Auditors
- Teach Auditors More
- Three Types of Corrective Action
- Layered Process Audits and Lean
- Demand Process Auditing
- Action List for your Company

### Testimonials

“Thank you for the most informative presentation in your role as W. Edwards Deming... I have received very positive feedback for not only the information presented, but also your effective delivery style. “

Robert F. Wolf, ASQ Lafayette Section 0917 Treasurer

“... your Lean, QMS workshop was one of the most value added workshops that I have attended. It has already helped out my Quality Systems folks and they haven't even met you yet.”

Wayne V. Hale Process & Quality Improvement Mgr.,  
Hytek Finishes Co.



Mike Micklewright is president of Quality Quest Inc., a Chicago-based consulting, training, and facilitation company specializing in lean, ISO 9001, ISO/TS 16949, Six Sigma, and their integration. Micklewright is an ASQ-certified Six Sigma Black Belt, quality auditor, quality engineer, and quality manager. He holds a degree in general engineering from the University of Illinois and has worked in design, manufacturing, and quality engineering for the Saturn Corp. of General Motors and Seaquist Perfect Dispensing. Micklewright is a sought-after speaker and has had many articles published, with a regular column in Quality Digest. He performs stand-up comedy in which he makes fun of the world of continual improvement and has developed, produced, acted in, and sells video training programs. For more information about Mike and Quality Quest Inc., go to:

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