

Teams are an essential strategy for fostering diversity and collaboration. This year 26 teams participated in the International Team Excellence Award competition, and they clearly demonstrated the power of integrating individual ideas to create a sum greater than the parts.

# The International Team Excellence Award

## A Process for Fostering Continuous Improvement and Teamwork

The Team Excellence Award competition was launched in 1985, and it has grown ever since with 719 teams participating so far. Those teams have come from the United States, Mexico, China, and Costa Rica.

Ann Lorentz, ASQ project manager, says, “We hope to expand the International Team Competition so that more organizations understand the value teams add to their success. If we double the excitement of the 26 teams from the Toronto

conference in Seattle 2005, we will be in for a truly exciting year!”

Indeed, excitement is an appropriate word to describe the atmosphere when this year’s finalist teams presented their projects during the 58th Annual Quality Congress (AQC) in Toronto May 24-25. The level of excitement rose even higher as the 26 finalist teams paraded into the plenary session on the last day of the congress, demonstrating their team spirit and showing that they all were winners. Then Ray Bunch, chair of

the Team Excellence Award Committee and lead judge, announced this year's official winners, listed below:

- **Gold Award:** Fidelity Wide Processing, Bulk Shipping Process Management Team (Hebron, KY); Mike Cook, Jason Cheek, Donna Clancy, Charles Goines, Dave Gottman, Walter Jones, Kevin Lee, Brandi Lenihan, Debbie McNeal, Howard Nemeroff, Robert Parks, Allen Ramsey, and Steve Wallace. (Contact Linda Nourse via e-mail at [linda.nourse@fmr.com](mailto:linda.nourse@fmr.com) or telephone her at 859-386-8299.)
- **Silver Award:** Honda of America Mfg., Inc., Fast and Furious (Marysville, OH); Steve Moore, Mike Penny, Terri Mattix, Dave Fender, Evan Evans, Jamie Beal, and Rusty Farley. (Contact Scott Wood via e-mail at [scott\\_wood@ham.honda.com](mailto:scott_wood@ham.honda.com) or by telephone at 937-642-5000 ext. 2023.)
- **Bronze Award:** The Boeing Company, Special Operations Loading Ramp, (Long Beach, CA); Mike Pokorny, Ned Newman, Craig Goldenson, Jon Stannard, Robert DeLamare, Elizabeth Haseltine, Steve Sipprell, Johnson Yip, Kevin Bryce, Teri Garten, Vilma Mandillo, and Marie Von Zaber. (Contact Cathy Tran by e-mail at [catherine.tran@boeing.com](mailto:catherine.tran@boeing.com) or by telephone at 562-593-5382.)

### Why Teams Participate

There are four primary reasons that organizations encourage their teams to participate in the Team Excellence Award competition, as described below:

- **Recognition.** The Team Excellence Award process is an excellent way to capture national and international recognition for an organization's team-based improvement efforts. Past winners have received extensive press coverage and high honors both internally and externally. Several past finalists have won previous awards or used the knowledge gained from the Team Excellence Award process to enter other prestigious competitions like the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.
- **Self-Assessment and Improvement.** All teams competing in the International Team Excellence Competition receive a feedback report and a score sheet detailing how they rated in each criteria area. The criteria and the feedback report help to identify strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. Several participating teams use the team award criteria for their internal competition and select their winning teams for our preliminary round process.

- **Benchmarking.** Many teams and organizations use the live competition at the annual conference to benchmark the best processes and teams in the country. Videos of the winners' presentations are available for organizations to use as role models.
- **Encouraging Excellence.** Participating in the Team Excellence process is also a superb way to promote business effectiveness and demonstrate commitment to quality and participation practices.

### The Competition Process

Participating teams are asked to submit a 25-minute video explaining their project and process. These presentations are then judged on how well they meet 36 team-evaluation criteria. (See the sidebar, Evaluation Criteria, p. 36.) The criteria rate everything necessary for team success—from the project's impact on organizational goals, project selection and purpose, to action planning, project buy-in, implementation, progress, and results.

In the preliminary round the video entries are carefully evaluated by a panel of judges, which is organized into several reviewing stations across the United States. These judges, who all are team process experts, represent diverse experiences and industries and complete rigorous training that ensures consistency in their evaluations.

Additionally, teams now can qualify through partnering organizations, such as state team excellence award programs (which currently exist in California, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Northeastern states [CT, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT], and Mexico), and the Honda Suppliers Conference. These teams proceed directly to the finalist round.

Qualifying teams (the finalists) are selected for the live presentations at AQC (which now will be called the ASQ World Conference on Quality and Improvement). All finalists are recognized and receive trophies during the opening session. The three highest scoring teams also receive the coveted Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards.

This year's evaluation process resulted in 26 teams presenting at AQC, including 11 teams that came through the Partner Awards program. Brief descriptions of their projects are provided in the sidebar, "Finalists' Project Abstracts" (p. 38). A quick review of these descriptions clearly demonstrates the versatility of the Team Excellence Award process and evaluation criteria.

Of course, this process could not occur without the dedicated work of many volunteers. The members of

the Team Excellence Award Committee and the judges are shown in the sidebar, “Process Leadership Team” (p. 38). Additionally, Geetha Balagopal, administrator, Team Excellence Awards, works year-round to provide the continuity required to effectively and efficiently coordinate the efforts of the many volunteers.

### The Ultimate Experience

Ray Bunch summarized the 2003-04 cycle, saying, “This year’s International Team Excellence competition was a wonderful thrill for all participants and attendees! The teams, judges, and dedicated staff were very proud to support the first ever Team Excellence affiliation with the ASQ Annual Quality Congress. All the teams made exciting live presentations as they shared their success stories and their passionate commitment to high performance. I’m confident that the Team Excellence process will continue to provide the world’s best forum for organizations and teams to demonstrate that employee involvement yields outstanding results. And once again, congratulations to all the teams!”

### 2004-05 Process Timeline

#### September 30, 2004

Intent to apply form due from teams.

#### November 12, 2004

Judges’ application due to coordinator.

#### By November 30, 2004

Judges notified of selection for judging the preliminary round entries.

#### December 17, 2004

Video entries due from teams.

#### January and February 2005

Judging of all team (video) entries (preliminary round) takes place.

#### By February 7, 2005

Entry materials due from Partner Award winners.

#### March 1, 2005

Teams notified of selection for final round at the annual conference.

#### March 31, 2005

Judges notified of selection for final round at the annual conference.

## Evaluation Criteria

### 1. Project Selection and Purpose (Nine factors at three points = 27 points possible.)

#### 1a. Explain the methods used to choose the project. (Provide specific examples of techniques and data used.)

- a. Reasons why the project was selected.
- b. Types of data and quality tools used to select the project and why.
- c. Involvement of potential stakeholders in project selection.

#### 1b. Explain how the project supports the organization’s goals.

- a. Listing of affected organizational goals/performance measures.
- b. Types of impact the project will have on each goal area.
- c. Degree of impact the project will have on each goal area.

#### 1c. Identify the potential stakeholders (those impacted by the project) and how they may be impacted by the project.

- a. Affected internal and external (if applicable) stakeholders.
- b. Types of potential impact on stakeholders.
- c. Degree of potential impact on stakeholders.

### 2. Current Situation Analysis (Six factors at 4.5 points = 27 points possible.)

#### 2a. Explain how the team used a formal process to identify the improvement opportunities/potential root cause(s).

- a. Methods and tools used to identify improvement opportunities or possible root cause(s).
- b. Analysis of data to identify possible improvement opportunities or root causes.

- c. Example of other actions taken to identify improvement opportunities or possible root causes.

**2b. Describe how the team analyzed information to identify the final improvement opportunities/root cause(s). (Include any appropriate validation.)**

- a. Methods and tools used to identify the final improvement opportunities or root cause(s).
- b. Analysis of data to verify that the best improvement opportunity or root cause was selected.
- c. Demonstration of how validation was ensured.

**3. Action Plan Development (Nine factors at three points = 27 points possible.)**

**3a. Explain the methods used to identify the improvement actions or potential solutions.**

- a. Methods and tools used to develop improvement actions or possible solutions.
- b. Analysis of data to develop possible improvement actions or possible solutions.
- c. Demonstration of how validation was ensured via methods, tools, etc.

**3b. Explain how the final improvement(s) or solution was determined.**

- a. Criteria used to select the final improvement action or solution.
- b. Use of methods, tools, and data to select the improvement action or solution.
- c. Involvement of stakeholders in the selection of the improvement or solution.

**3c. Explain the justification/benefits of the improvement(s) or solution.**

- a. Types of tangible and intangible benefits that are expected to be realized.
- b. Use of data to justify the project.
- c. Comparison of budgeted to actual costs or use of other justification methods.

**4. Project Buy-In, Implementation, Progress, and Results (Nine factors at three points = 27 points possible.)**

**4a. Explain how buy-in/agreement was achieved for implementation.**

- a. Types of internal and external (if applicable) stakeholder involvement.
- b. How various types of resistance were addressed.
- c. Proof/validation that buy-in existed.

**4b. Explain the methods that were developed/installed to ensure the results.**

- a. Use of stakeholder feedback in implementation.
- b. Procedure or system changes that were made.
- c. Creation and installation of a system for measuring results.

**4c. Describe the results achieved.**

- a. Types of tangible and intangible results that were realized.
- b. Linkage of project impact on organizational performance and goals.
- c. How results were shared with stakeholders.

**5. The team will also be evaluated on: (Three factors at three points = nine points possible.)**

- a. The clarity and organization of the presentation.
- b. The effective use of presentation aids (charts, graphs, visuals, etc.).
- c. The demonstration of involvement by all team members throughout the project.

For more information regarding the criteria, criteria details, guidelines and timeline, judges' application, score sheet and feedback templates, and other samples, please contact the administrator, Team Excellence Awards, Geetha Balagopal, at Gbalagopal@asq.org , telephone 800-248-1946, ext. 7303, or 919-844-2971.

## Process Leadership Team

### International Team Excellence Awards Committee

Ray Bunch, chair  
Bunch Associates, Inc.

Jim Bianchetta, president  
Bianchetta Resources

Rich Carpenter, president  
SRC Associates

Raymond Emery  
Scitor Corporation

Robert Finkelmeier  
Finkelmeier & Associates

Michael Levenhagen  
Oshkosh Truck Corporation

Patricia Noonan  
Noonan & Associates

Dr. Roberta Sappington  
Federal Aviation Administration Center for Management Development

Dr. Cheryl Wild  
Wild & Associates, Inc.

### Lead Judges

Ray Bunch, chair  
Bunch Associates, Inc.

Jim Bianchetta  
Bianchetta Resources

Ray Emery  
Scitor Corporation

Pat Noonan  
Noonan & Associates

Glenn Walters  
G W Enterprises

### Final Judges

Barry Bickley  
Bank of America

Glenda Boyd  
Jacobs Sverdrup, Cape Canaveral Group

Barbara Chatzkel  
The New River Group

Wayne Conover  
Jim Beam Brands

Nancy Cooper  
Dear Ms. Mentor™

Peggy Darragh-Jeromos  
Your Write Resource

Becky Fulgoni  
Landscape Forms

Ted Harpole  
In-Site Technology, Inc.

Carol Harris  
Xcel Energy

Kenneth Ho  
PHP

John Hopkins  
Apex, Inc.

Randy Jackson  
Dana Corporation

Douglas Jones  
A-B Technical College

Joe Kane  
Coors Brewing Company

Dr. Milton Krivokuca  
Davenport University

Pete Leibundguth  
Scitor Corporation

Mike Levenhagen  
Oshkosh Truck Corporation

Janet MacDonald  
R.L. Deppmann Company

Robert McFarland  
Beechtree Consulting, LLP

Dak Murthy  
NJ Transit

Keith Nelson  
Department of the Air Force

Peter Scott  
Immunicon Corporation

Vaidesh Subramanyam  
Aims, Inc.

Gary Turner  
Turner Consulting

Dr. Ralph Waltman  
Kent State University

### Master Scorekeeper

Dr. Robert Finkelmeier  
Finkelmeier & Associates

## Finalists' Project Abstracts

Organizations of all sizes and structures enter teams in the competition. These teams excel in their ability to solve problems in a collaborative manner. Here are brief descriptions of the 26 projects undertaken by this year's finalists, clearly demonstrating that the process is useful for solving a wide variety of issues facing organizations.

### Analog Devices

#### EPI Centura Team

The EPI Centura team focused on an acute equipment utilization issue. By collaborating with the equipment manufacturer and focusing on problem solving, this cross-functional team increased capacity in a bottleneck area of the manufacturing line.

### Analog Devices

#### Let's Get Physical

This cross-functional team improved the Silicon Valley site medical management system, preplacement exams, ERT and respirator physicals, and workers' compensation medical case management. Significant

improvements were achieved in cost reduction, better access to critical medical information, and increased quality of service delivery.

### Baxter, Cartago, Costa Rica

#### Anesthesia Circuits Problem Solving Team

This team faced the problem of easy separation of components on Anesthesia Circuits. The root cause was identified as Adult Isoflex tubing cuff design. Solutions included new cuff design, new resin, and improvement of assembly operation. This resulted in a 100% reduction of complaints, a savings of \$240,000, and a better ergonomic assembly process.

## **Baxter Healthcare**

### *Membrane Process Management Team*

The Membrane Process Team was tasked with resolving a performance and customer issue related to particulate matter. Utilizing the DMIAC problem-solving approach, improvement was seen in the areas of customer satisfaction, defect level, productivity, machine utilization, and scrap, resulting in a total savings of \$250,000.

Partner Award:  
KANSAS  
Winner

### **Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Wichita Division** *Boeing High Flyers*

This project focused on the forward pressure bulkhead and its spatial relationship to two major assembly components. This multi-organizational team transformed a high-risk, moderate-gain manufacturing process into a low-risk, high-gain initiative through the utilization of high performance teaming, lean practices, and customer focus.

Partner Award:  
KANSAS  
Winner

### **Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Wichita Division** *Integrated Audit Team*

The Integrated Audit Team was challenged to combine audit data from various sources and develop metrics to provide relevant data to management. The team succeeded in reducing the number of databases used and combined available audit data to help manage the business successfully.

## **DynMcDermott Petroleum Operations Company**

### *Project Review Six Sigma Team*

The Project Review Team evaluated the way that contractor and overall SPR periodic performance reviews were conducted in an effort to become more cost effective, efficient, more future focused, and more usable by DOE and DM management. Their efforts resulted in a cost reduction/avoidance of \$337,000 per year.

## **DynMcDermott Petroleum Operations Company**

### *Toner Cartridge Recycling Performance Improvement Team*

The team was tasked with developing a standardized process for disposing of toner cartridges in an environmentally friendly manner. Different site

requirements and methods were contributing to unnecessary waste generation. Results included cost savings, expanded community outreach, reduced labor by more than 300 man-hours, reduction of sanitary waste, and a positive impact on recycling behaviors.

## **DynMcDermott Petroleum Operations Company**

### *Vehicle Accident Performance Improvement Team*

The Vehicle Accident Prevention Team was chartered to develop strategies to reduce the number of vehicle accidents involving government vehicles. As a result of the team's activities, the rate was reduced from 5.6 vehicle accidents per million miles traveled to 1.8.

Gold Award

### **Fidelity Wide Processing** *Bulk Shipping Process Management Team*

The purpose of the team was to reduce controllable shipping costs and operating unit cost, and improve productivity in the bulk shipping operations area. Through implementation of a cross-functional process management team and utilization of quality tools, shipping costs were reduced by 20%, productivity improved by 30%, and unit costs were lowered by 36%.

Partner Award:  
MEXICO  
Winner

### **Galvak, S.A. de C.V.** *Team GHIA*

Team GHIA was tasked with reducing defective material in a roofing panel product called Galvateja. The project's goal was to reduce by 60% the PPMs of defective material and increase the process capability from 3.5 to 3.9 sigmas. Through the DMAIC process, the team met the project objectives and achieved \$100,000 in cost savings.

Silver Award

### **Honda of America Mfg., Inc.** *Fast and Furious*

This team worked on the problem of instrument panels pulled off line due to damage. The damage occurred during transit when the panels bumped into each other. The solution was to modify the cart to prevent this from occurring. Instrument panel damage was reduced by 90%, resulting in an annual cost savings of \$500,000.

Partner Award:  
NEW JERSEY  
Winner

### **Horizon BlueCross BlueShield of New Jersey** *Inquiry Process Redesign Team*

Through a cross-functional team approach, the inquiry process was redesigned, resulting in improved staff productivity and cost per call. The project also improved customer satisfaction, as evidenced by placement as the top insurer on the New Jersey State HMO Performance Report Card for Customer Service.

Partner Award:  
NEW JERSEY  
Winner

### **JPMorgan Chase** *Right the First Time*

The team used Six Sigma methodology to analyze data and internal processes and reduce adjustments in northeast item processing by 50%. This cross-functional team of 72 employees worked together to improve the customer experience, streamline internal processes, and reduce operating costs by \$1.4 million annually.

Partner Award:  
NEW JERSEY  
Winner

### **Merrill Lynch** *Trade Confirmation Redesign*

As part of a continuing effort to improve the client experience, Merrill Lynch redesigned its trade confirmation and mailing process. This redesign allowed for the consolidation of trading activity into a comprehensive daily statement for easy client viewing. As a result of the redesign, Merrill Lynch expects to reduce client mailings by 30%.

### **Sandia National Laboratories** *Quality-Significant Team*

The Sandia Quality-Significant Procurement Team launched a procurement risk management program using a graded approach that complies with revised federal regulations. This program gives customers greater confidence for purchases that have the potential to cause harm to people, property, or the environment.

Partner Award:  
HONDA SUPPLIER  
CONFERENCE  
Winner

### **TBDN Tennessee Company** *Glue Crew*

The team worked on improving a long-standing bottleneck in the gluing area. By using a variety of problem-solving tools, the team standardized the process and procedures, decreased downtime, reduced overtime, improved the inventory status, and saved more than \$44,000.

Partner Award:  
CALIFORNIA  
Winner

### **The Boeing Company** *C-17 Quick Response Center*

Schedule delays and poor quality demonstrated by outside supplier performance resulted in significant out-of-position work and rework on the assembly line, causing substantial cost overruns and severe part shortages. After careful strategic planning, the C-17 Quick Response Center was successfully established to support urgent parts requirements for the C-17 Globemaster III program.

Partner Award:  
CALIFORNIA  
Winner

### **The Boeing Company** *Center Fuselage Lean Operations Team*

The C-17 Center Fuselage Team sought to improve processes, productivity, and quality by implementing "lean" practices into their business. This resulted in a total cost savings of \$28 million over the life of the C-17 program.

### **The Boeing Company** *Executive Steering Group (ESG)*

This team project was created as a result of declining C-17 mission capable and fleet available rates. This had a direct impact on the availability of aircraft for customers to schedule and fly their peacetime and wartime missions. This team's accomplishments resulted in significant improvements to the C-17 mission capable and fleet available rates.

### **The Boeing Company** *Fuel Contamination Team*

After a C-17 Globemaster III airlifter returning to the United States from a mission in Europe experienced an overboard fuel venting incident, a cross-functional crisis management team was assembled to resolve the issue. The team utilized several innovative ideas to help overcome this problem while maintaining the highest level of quality in the design.

### **The Boeing Company** *Macon Slats 3 & 4 Team*

The Macon Slats 3 & 4 Team was formed when issues resulting in no-fit conditions and foreign object debris (FOD) on the slats 3 and 4 were identified by the customer. The team focused on process improvements to the slats, resulting in 100% customer satisfaction through schedule, cost, and delivery.

### **The Boeing Company**

#### *Reverse Auction Team*

This team was tasked with implementing a new process into Boeing’s way of purchasing parts. Reverse auctions were used, with the lowest bidder winning the contract. After successful implementation of reverse auctions, more than \$500,000 in cost savings to the program resulted.

**Bronze Award**

### **The Boeing Company**

#### *Special Operations Loading Ramp*

A multifunctional team was formed to enhance the capability of the C-17 aircraft to meet a new customer requirement. The current design increased the risk of potential injury and did not support the rapid movement of equipment. This team’s activities resulted in a flawless design and delivery of the new product.

**Partner Award:  
CALIFORNIA  
Winner**

### **The Boeing Company**

#### *Wing Optimization Team*

This project was a result of a bottleneck that developed in the production build. This team was faced with absorbing a work package called the “forward and aft closeout panels,” which would significantly impact current workflow. After successful implementation, the bottleneck was eliminated, span time reduced, and first-time quality is the norm.

**Partner Award:  
FLORIDA  
Winner**

### **United Space Alliance, LLC**

#### *Ground Support Equipment Load Test Team*

The load test process for space shuttle lifting equipment was inconsistent with average cycle times of 55 days. The team standardized the process, eliminated unnecessary testing, and freed up more than 600 annual labor hours. Cycle time was reduced to a single day, saving approximately \$1 million for the space shuttle program.