

**NEWSLETTER - May 29, 2001**  
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## **Feature Paper**

### **Quality in Small Firms: Employee Centered or Process Centered**

This paper was presented by Robert D. Gulbro, Linda Shonesy, and Paul Dreyfus, all from Athens State University, at the Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, February 27-March 3, 2001.

Several manufacturing firms were surveyed to find answers to questions about their quality activities, and to determine the focus of those activities. Firms of all sizes were queried and smaller firm activities were compared to those of larger firms. Attempts at finding significant differences between small and large firms were successful. The responses described differences in focus among firms of differing sizes. In this study the smaller firms depended more upon employees to obtain quality while larger firms tended to be process centered.

The economic environment that firms are currently operating in is characterized by rapid changes brought on by globalization and market deregulation. To compete firms must improve performance by decreasing costs and increasing quality. However, attaining high quality products has been a problem for U.S. firms in the past. Japanese firms were able to take market share because of their higher quality in such manufactured products as automobiles, television sets, and other electronics items. U.S. manufacturers tended to ignore the potential of quality management until the 1970s, when the realization that quality was important to consumers could no longer be ignored.

To read this entire paper on , visit our Web site at  
<http://www.sbaer.uca.edu/Research/2001/ASBE/49asbe01.htm>

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## **Tip Of the Week**

## "Improving and Controlling Quality"

There are many ways a small business can improve quality, but we will discuss only three: setting up quality circles, designing quality into the product and operations, and installing a good quality control process.

**Establishing Quality Circles** Many progressive companies report good results from using quality circle programs. In quality circles small groups of workers meet regularly to identify and develop ways to solve company problems, especially quality. The members, who are usually not supervisors, receive training in areas such as problem identification, communications, and problem solving. Also, as they meet, they may have access to resource people who can provide further expertise. Quality circles seem to be more successful when top management gives them unrestricted support.

**Designing Quality into the Process** Since quality is achieved during the production of a product, the processes must be designed to produce the desired quality. Machines must be capable of turning out the product within set tolerances, workers must be trained to produce that level of quality, and materials and goods must be purchased that meet the stated standards. In service companies, employees must be trained to understand a customer's needs and to perform the work to the customer's satisfaction. If the process or employees cannot produce the proper quality of output, no type of control can correct the situation.

**Installing a Quality Control System** Quality control, or quality assurance, is a system used by a producer to ensure that the finished goods or services meet the expectations of customers, as advocated by the late W. Edwards Deming, the "Quality Guru."

Regardless of what methods or techniques are used to achieve it, effective quality control involves at least the following steps:

- Setting standards for the desired quality range.
- Measuring actual performance.
- Comparing that performance with established standards.
- Making corrections when needed.

"Small Business Management: An Entrepreneur's Guidebook," Megginson, William, Byrd, Mary, and Megginson-Emeritus, Leon, The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc., 2000, page 311-312.

## Conference

### Advanced Research Techniques Forum

This conference will be held in Amelia Island, Florida, on June 24-27, 2001. This is a unique annual event for marketing researchers, analysts, statisticians, and academicians featuring talks by practitioners and academics on the application of cutting-edge research methods and models. This two and a half day conference fosters an environment of lively and open discussion where different methods can be shared and critiqued.

For further information on this conference, visit <http://www.ama.org/events>

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## Conference

### 22nd Annual Marketing Research Conference

This conference will be held on September 23-26, 2001, in Atlanta, Georgia. Focusing on best practices, experts will reveal ideology on top methodologies and brands. They will also share what they have learned about organizing marketing research and staffing. Attendees will get ideas for improving the effectiveness of marketing research for their organizations, as well as improving their own personal contributions.

For further information on this conference, visit <http://www.ama.org/events>

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## Call For Papers

### ITiRA Conference

The ITiRA (Information Technology in Regional Areas) conference will be held on September 5-7, 2001, in Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia. This conference is intended to be a "learning conference", providing a forum for delegates to review and reflect on the community based applications of IT in a tropical setting close to Barrier Reef Islands. It will also give the community in Central Queensland, including local business, community activists, government officials, and researchers interested in these areas, an opportunity to learn about regional applications of IT from national and international authorities.

Submission deadline for papers: **June 15, 2001**

For more details on the this conference, visit <http://itira.cqu.edu.au/>

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## Call For Papers

### IT EXPO (ITEX)

Itex 2001 will be held on September 6-8, 2001, in Rockhampton Queensland, Australia. Itex 2001 will provide a premium marketplace for the technology and business community to launch new products, display the latest technology and learn more about emerging technologies. The expo will showcase the technology business community to the public and potential buyers locally, nationally, and internationally. In addition, Itex2001 will allow both businesses and consumers to learn through programs, seminars and displays focused on today's hottest topics and sought-after technologies.

For more details on the this conference, visit <http://www.itex2001.com/>

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## Call For Papers

### Syllabus Fall 2001

This conference and expo will be held on November 29-December 2, 2001, at the Sheraton Ferncroft Resort in Danvers, Massachusetts. Syllabus conferences attract faculty, administrators, and IT professionals who want to explore the latest applications of information technology in higher education institutions. The conferences offer an environment in which attendees encounter exemplary campus implementations for teaching as well as administration, and they discover how new media are best integrated into the teaching and learning process. The need for coordination among stakeholders in the technology decision-making process (faculty, IT, and administrative groups) is acknowledged and facilitated through various session formats and presentation types, and ample opportunities for networking and peer interaction are offered.

Submission deadline for papers: **June 1, 2001**

For more details on the this conference, visit <http://www.syllabus.com/>

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## Call For Papers

### Southwestern Business Administration Teaching Conference

The Ninth Annual Southwestern Business Administration Teaching Conference will be held on October 25-26, 2001, at Texas Southern University. The conference is cosponsored by the Jesse H. Jones School of Business and the Organizational Behavior Teaching Society - a national organization of management educators. The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for exchanging ideas about, identifying emerging trends in, learning new approaches to, and examining issues involved in teaching the various disciplines of business administration. Anyone interested in the following teaching areas should attend: Accounting, Business Communication, Business Education, Business Law, Business Ethics, Business Statistics, Economics, Finance, Insurance, Management, Management Information Systems, Management Science, Marketing, Office Management, Real Estate, or other disciplines in Business Administration. Faculty from related disciplines - Education, Psychology, Public Administration, Social Work, Sociology, and Technology - can also benefit from the conference, since many of the sessions focus on pedagogy rather than academic content.

Submission deadline for papers: **June 30, 2001**

For more details on the this conference, visit  
<http://www.sbaer.uca.edu/Bulletins/Confrences/STATC2001.htm>

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## Announcement

### The Information Center for Entrepreneurship (ICE)

The Information Center for Entrepreneurship at the Jonkoping University in Sweden is a special collection which holds more than 10,000 titles and more than 70 periodicals focusing on entrepreneurship, small business and innovation. The latest addition is a searchable collection of links to more than 600 websites dealing with entrepreneurship and related topics.

For further information visit <http://www.hj.se/ice>

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- If you have any comments about the SBANC newsletter or if you know of any upcoming small business event to promote, please contact Richard Armstrong at [rea7401@cub.uca.edu](mailto:rea7401@cub.uca.edu)

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- SBANC Newsletter is provided as a service to the **Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ASBE)** members and the **International Council for Small Business (ICSB)** members.
  - If interested in becoming a member of ASBE, contact Corbett Gaulden, Jr., at [gaulden\\_c@utpb.edu](mailto:gaulden_c@utpb.edu)
  - If interested in becoming a member of ICSB, visit <http://www.icsb.org/about/join.htm>
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If you would like to be added to the list, you may send a message to the same address with the word "**add**" in the subject line.