Why & How We Have Successfully Built A Biomed/Biotech SIG – 8 Years of Continuous Improvement, Lessons learned, and Opportunities

C.J. George Chang, DVM, MS’, PhD
Chair, ASQ 509 Biomed/Biotech SIG
Section 509 General Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2016
(My personal opinions)
Agenda

1. Why we needed to build this SIG?
2. What I concluded then (an SWOT analysis) to move forward?
3. Our improvement and measurement
4. Why/how we’ve successful building it!
5. Our Lessons Learned and opportunities
Trained as a veterinarian, veterinary pathologist, pharmacologist, toxicologist, and self-trained analytical chemist

Sectors experienced: Military, academia, tobacco, contract research, bioinformatics, pharmaceutical, regulatory arena

I arrived at the US in 1983, and learned one critical US festival: Halloween!
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Knock the Doors -

• “If you don’t ask, you will never get it.”

• If you ask, you will be surprised what you will get.”

- C.J. George Chang
Never Ask a wrong question!!!

“In Metropolitan DC where 1/3 of population works in the biomed/biotech space, why ASQ509 has not considered to cover that area?”

- I asked in 2008 at an ASQ509 General meeting
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“You will be the CHAIR !!!”
- Eugene (Gene) Kirsch, 2008 ASQ509 President

“Our 8 years of Continuous Improvement” – Tonight’s theme
SWOT Analysis (1)

Strength –
• Four (4) critical types of employers (G/C/IT/B) in town
• ASQ and Section 509 had run decades of quality Op. (Gene Kirsch, Ryan Burge, Dan Mellon, Scott Ankrum)
• I was trained in academia, grew in industry & government – I am aware of biomed opportunities & Challenges
• I volunteer broadly in town then – open my eyes to many
  - U alumni, QC, service, team-building, and leadership

Weakness –
• I had never conducted any “operational” projects/events
• I had minimal experience serving on a mainstream board
SWOT Analysis (2)

Opportunity – (October 2008 stock-market crash)
• An urgent need for job-finding networking platform
• No existing strong competition locally
• Section leaders then strongly encouraged/supported
• I was trained for CQA, LSSBB, MD Baldrige (judge) Continuous Improvement programs

Threats –
Minimal funding, tiny network, not a decision-maker
Very few ASQ participants; most were seniors (50 yr+)
What Have We Modified Since?

An Expanded Audience Base – (the “15%” concept)

• Whoever attended our events are added to our SIG expanded network
• Consistently proactively given an elevator speech for this SIG over the years
• Include past-event speakers and future speakers in the loop
• Written invitations (a template established and updated) with detail info and value
• Best use SIG’s We blink address as a selling tool in email (one-stop shop with mission, past events ...)

Content and Way We Announce SIG Events – (What readers want? How we reach out to them? Direct sell)

• Summary of presentation
• Speakers’ bios and later contact info
• Speakers’ photos
• Driving/walking direction to venue with venue map
• Many and many read our event announcements
What Have We Modified Since? - Continued

Things Attract Audience – What Excite Them?

- A diverse and inclusive audience to include for learning/sharing/mentorship/opportunity/collaboration
- Involve all attendees (speakers + attendees)
- We facilitating all needed clarifications, leaving no uncertainty moving forward during presentations
- Focus on what the event and each audience needs
  - Mini-speech, job, talent, opinion/question, quality book  contact info, presentation file,
  - career advice, internship, mentor
  - career direction, match-making

Feedback Received & Follow Through – Continuous improvement

- Feedback to improve – Ways events were conducted, food choice, specialty food needs
- Negotiated significant discount for pizzas
- Speaker/topic recommendation
- Understand what network audience really care the most
- A bigger room with better room-temperature control
Key Success Elements (1)

Location -
• Rockville, Central to I-270 Biomed Corridor (vs. FDA White Oak campus) - center for ASQ membership, key base of biomed/biotech community (NIH, FDA, DA), and most speakers

Topics -
• Timely (GMO, nanotech, melamine, Fukushima, BP-gulf spill)
• High priorities (leadership, regulations, inspection, sequestration, smart cut, reorg., entrepreneur, funding)
• Informative, persuasive, entertaining, and inspiring

Format -
• All inclusiveness (participants + speakers)
• learning/networking/mentoring/collaborating
• Facilitating, leaving no uncertainty
• Passionately selling to potential speakers & audience
Key Success Elements (2)

Speakers -
- National or Internationally known (free)
- Effective leaders (informative, persuasive, entertaining, inspiring)
- Consistent Operation with momentum, delivered beyond expectations

Value-Stream Added -
- Connect participants
- Train participants – pizza dinner, self-introduction, clarification, book prizes, effective networking, contact information
- Improve – Plan, launch, remind, facilitate, mentor, collaborate, outreach

Transparent / Visible – Share the Critical Presentations/Discussion
- Shared critical info globally – SIG webpage – One-stop shop (flyers, presentations, speakers’ contact, speakers’ bios)

Culture -
- Talking about oneself; appraising others (recognition/connect)
- No fear/hesitate to ask questions, or making comments (safety environment)
- Building teams, network, collaboration
Key Success Elements (3)

Workshops – Social Responsibility

- Food Safety workshop (2015)
- US Mental Health/Substance Abuse workshop (2016)

Collaboration/Co-sponsorship -

- Connect – Expand to academia, industry, government, NGO
- Cosponsored by local non-profit groups
- Have been invited to speak/coordinate events at various platforms

Feedback Channel, Transparent & Follow Through -

- Have an open feedback channel – well used
- Invited ASQ509 leaders and Custom Voice to shine our Section
- Provided personal advice on CV/career, connect to opportunities, operation improvement
- Many received employment offers
How We Measure Success (1)

**Topic/Program: Participants** - Give folks a purpose to come
- Returned attendees, returned speakers as audience, or new referrals
- Enjoyable experience from attendees and SIG chair (feedback)
- Constantly open feedback channels receiving new ideas for improvement
- Age group widen, all inclusive ethnicity, across disciplines and sectors
- Member/Nonmember (M/N) ratio steadily increases (a village of experts)

**Value: Learning/Network** – Build a platform for communities
- From 15 to 7,000+ local professionals (450x)
- Globally connected (hundreds in Asia and some in Europe)
- Too many attendees were connected through “word-of-mouth”

**Cost: Minimal Expense** – Make every dollar/event counts
- We failed if we have more than 1.5 pizzas left (50% discounted)
- Track closely our yearly spending against budget ($)
- Many organizations are considering to cosponsor/collaborate
How We Measure Success (2)

Model-Building - Improve toward a Model Operation
  • Ways of reminding folks and conduct events
  • Value stream added
  • Inspire similar operations initiated by past-event attendees
  • Impact to other operation (including GM) toward model section goal
  • Facilitate interactions/collaboration between member and nonmember

Network-Building -
  • From the initial 15 seniors (Avg. aged 50+) to 7,000+ local professionals (Avg. age ~40)
  • Globally connected (hundreds in Asia and some in Europe)
  • Diverse, inclusion, equality
  • Many connected through “word-of-mouth”
How We Measure Success (3)

Career Building & Professional Development -
• Job-landing (2-3 weeks with an offer in hand)
• Constantly provide advice on CVs, tips on job-interview, career development, mentorship, guides on operational improvement

Collaboration & Rescuing Operation of other organizations -
• Occasionally was invited to rescue operation of others
• Routinely being invited to speak/plan/launch/chair events or workshops
Our Lessons Learned (1)

- If we **TAKE A TIMELY RISK** to volunteer/serve; it will open our career doors - or opportunities go away.
- If we **build one platform with TRUE VALUE** and we passionately sell it; **People Will Come**.
- If we **build TRUST**, people will continue to come and help.
- ONE DAY, folks within the network will eventually come.
- We have built a **MODEL platform** for careers, network, teams for our community.
- This is one **significant learning/networking PLATFORM** for local community and globally - similar operations will be established nation-wide and globally.
Our Lessons Learned (2)

• Regulations and compliance-related topics sell
• Government regulator speakers sell
• Leadership, entrepreneurship, career development & mentorship sell
• Public Health/care focus, though critically important, attracts minimal interest (no $ but moral incentive) but is our social responsibility
Our Lessons Learned (3)

“Quality” likes IT, molecular biology & project management, is a type of tool, skill and practice

• **Only through its applications helping other disciplines** can speak for its true value.
• **Quality and Continuous Improvement** are keys to ensure competitiveness and sustainability for all individuals, teams, and organizations.
• **Listen carefully and pick priorities to work on.**
• **Take the calculated risk; bring positivity to society, and make life more meaningful.**
Opportunities (for this SIG)

Virtue-Access -
- Web-access Technology challenges
- Requirement: Need speaker consensus to share presentation in advance

Venue -
- Room size no longer sufficient (standing room often)
- Limited funding not allowing providing air-conditioning/heating

Funding Pressure – Co-sponsorship
- SIG Op. + budgeting + getting co-sponsorship
- Involve marketing and Customers’ Voice

Building A Village of Coaches/Mentors/Teams/Volunteers -
- Advice on CV, career, operation improvement
- Career development, entrepreneur, regulatory workshops
Opportunity (for Section 509) - What Should We Do timely?

- **Build trust/ownership; Do Not build Layers**
- Consider to **strengthen Section’s programs**; technology only helps
- Proactively involve Section’s **membership** to present/serve
- Help strong **operation/programs**; not suppress/discourage them
- “To build a model section” is **NOT** a slogan; need **effective actions** & **true passion**
- **Select competent leaders with true commitment + passion**