

Why & How We Have Successfully Built A Biomed/Biotech SIG

– 8 Years of Continuous Improvement, Lessons learned, and Opportunities

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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