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## Managing Expectations: Great Expectations

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I was asked several weeks ago to write a series of articles about quality for Quality Blog. I started to think about what would be a great topic and then became entranced with the last twenty-nine years that I have spent in the quality field. Furthermore, I had just returned from a three-week road trip visiting and demonstrating our new job management system to manufacturers at a rate of two to three companies per day.

When I returned, I told my wife that it amazed me that in the year 2008 those companies are dealing with the exact same issues and quality challenges that I had dealt with in 1980 while working at a ferrous investment casting company. I was perplexed at how solutions, initiatives and programs were simply not passed on by the generations in the work force. One would expect that currently, we all would clearly understand the road to success.

In order to create a theme for my articles and add value to the quality profession, I believe it is imperative to define quality and therefore define the topics that I intend to write about in the coming weeks and months. Over the years, quality has taken on many different definitions. It almost seems that quality is a sophisticated chameleon that changes depending on who we talk with and the heart of the conversation.

I intend to write about business expectations. I feel very strongly that the word

“expectations” clearly state everyone’s definition of quality. In fact, a quality or a management system is ultimately designed to manage expectations at all levels:

- Customer expectations;
- Supplier expectations;
- Employee expectations;
- Regulatory and Government expectations;
- Community expectations;
- Organizational expectations.

In addition to managing expectations, one other powerful word constantly challenges us. The word is “change.” Change is a relentless factor that throws monkey wrenches into our management plans as if to poke fun at us.

When we put these two words together, we get closer to reality.

Managing changing expectations will be my theme and I look forward to dissecting changing expectations in my articles to come.

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