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**QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY
IMPROVEMENT**
at
THE ESQUIRE CLUB

By John McConnell

In 1985, The Philadelphia Area Council for Excellence organized a tour of Japan. They visited plants in the automotive, construction and electronics industries, amongst others. Plant visits were organized by The Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers (JUSE). Everywhere they went, the Americans saw the Q Mark logo adopted in 1960 as the symbol of participation in the JUSE Total Quality Control program. It is a red Q on a white background

One evening, some of the tour members decided to eat at a nightclub called the Esquire Club. A young attractive waitress dressed in a brief red outfit complete with fishnet stockings, red bow tie and bunny ears approached them. One of the group noticed a tag hanging from the hem of her costume. It was the Q Mark logo.

Soon the waitress was bombarded with questions. In order to respond satisfactorily, she fetched a summary of a recently completed project, to reduce losses of beer and sake sales. The documents contained Gantt charts, Ishikawa or fishbone diagrams, run charts, Pareto charts and cost analyses. The end result of their initial projects was that operating expenses as a percentage of revenues fell from 83% in May to 67% in July. Half of this reduction is a function of reduced losses in beer and sake sales.

The approach used, from problem identification and definition, through to collecting and analysing data, implementing changes and testing their worth in data and then to building

control measures to prevent slippage is so close to the PDSA or DMAIC process that it is enough to bring a tear to the eye of even the most battle hardened consultant.



One man took photographs of the girl and the documents. They formed the basis of a book by Don Wheeler, *SPC at the Esquire Club*.⁽¹⁾

The project leader was the supervisor of the waitresses, Ms. Yuki. The team members were seven waitresses ranging in age from 19 to 23 years.

If a group of entry level employees led by their supervisor can reduce operating expenses by 7% in a few months, what might be achieved by a determined and knowledgeable management team?

The solution is not the acquisition of new knowledge alone. Knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient. With new knowledge must come updated physical structures that are aligned with the aims of conquering variation and creating

joy in work. Also, a determined management team willing to accept nothing less than six sigma levels of performance both in the business and in the customer's hands is necessary.

Mark Twain wrote that the man who does not read books has no advantage over the man that can not read them.

In a like manner, those who won't use variability reduction techniques such as SPC and six sigma have no advantage over those who can't.

Reference:

D. J. Wheeler, SPC at the Esquire Club, 1992, SPC Press