



Andrew Baines, Managing Director, ASQ Global

Interview with Andrew Baines

Managing Director, ASQ Global

Energised by the latest directions key governments in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) are taking to further educate highly skilled workers and those in high-level positions, ASQ – the global leader in quality improvement and standards – decided to reinforce its investments in education in the region.

Andrew Baines, Managing Director of ASQ Global shares with us the strategy, some of the initiatives and early results from their engagement efforts in MEA.

MCI: What qualifies a truly global organisation from others?

Andrew Baines: It is clear to me that successful global associations not only understand the need for a long-term strategy, but they know that success often has as much to do with relationships built up over a long period rather than short-term wins. Building those relationships does take time. ASQ has invested in its presence in MEA and we are confident that by getting a deeper understanding of what distinguishes our way of doing business from another's is both good business sense and an elemental part of what ASQ does to spread its mission.

MCI: Why is learning and development such a huge focus for ASQ?

A. B.: ASQ is a global community of people passionate about quality, who use the tools, their ideas, and their expertise to make our world work better. Unparalleled knowledge resources in ASQ books and standards can advance careers to the next level of excellence.

MCI: How do you know education is a pressing issue for ASQ in MEA?

A. B.: Each year, we talk with members and customers all over the world including the MEA region and utilise what we hear to guide our key research products like the *Global Voice of Quality*.

MCI: What did you learn from earlier researches?

A. B.: In MEA, the floating population and projected growth of all key industry segments clearly demonstrates that the gaps in the skill set are going to continue to grow. Together with the lingering impact of the financial crisis, all this makes it important that ASQ does its fair share in promoting a better understanding of quality learning and certification and its long-lasting benefits for business. That knowledge will give people in the MEA region the insights and confidence they need to make the right decisions and empower them to better their career opportunities.

MCI: What innovative approach has ASQ MEA taken to combat the skill set gaps?

A.B.: We have been very innovative in our

approach in mapping a Registered Service Provider (RSP) process along with conducting public and in-house trainings for our members and customers in the region. We are dedicated to creating Local Member Communities, led by members. The introduction of Student Chapters has helped us focus on building the next generation of quality professionals. Last year, we introduced the *UAE Professionals Award* and an annual ASQ MEA conference. We are confident that our varied products and services, along with our learning offerings are a win-win mix for us in the region.

MCI: Can you share some results from the RSP initiative?

A.B.: Last year, the number of RSPs increased from 2 to 7 with a revenue increase from 10 to 40%. At the same time the number of certifications grew by 18% and product sales by 8%. Membership also grew by 3% in just a few months.



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Insider's view

MCI: What did MCI add to ASQ's approach in the MEA region?

Kavitha Prabhu: We suggested ASQ to deliver e-certificates of attendance to each conference and/or training participants. Another initiative was to train the partners' marketing teams and constantly empower them with content for their marketing efforts. We also promoted these partners on the regional website.

A series of meetings was organised with the partners to ensure we set them up for success.

MCI: How did you help make this RSP process successful?

K. P.: Having feet on the ground and understanding the various cultural needs helped us identify partners that were well qualified to deliver trainings with the "quality" approach.

We focused on ensuring the training partners had the right qualified trainers and could deliver "world class training" with a regional touch. Original materials and textbooks are a must.



Kavitha Prabhu,
Director Association Management &
Consulting, MCI UAE

MCI: What are your key recommendations for a successful implementation?

K. P.: Determination, staying focused and monitoring the process closely. A constant ear to the ground and the ability to be flexible are also key!