Quality Times

Celebrating 40 Years
TRIUMF

We want to hear from you on this issue.
qualitytimes@triumf.ca

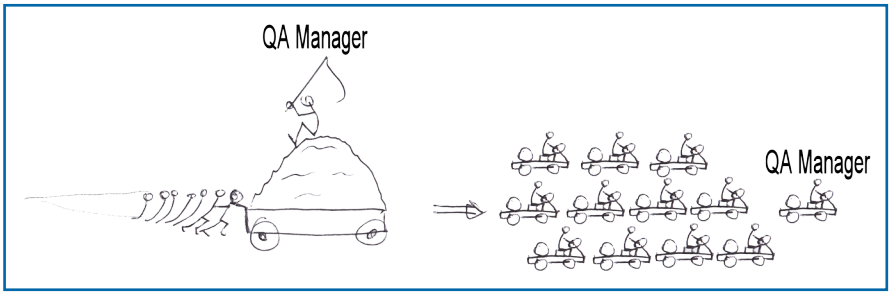
TRIUMF
4004 Wesbrook Mall,
Vancouver, BC
V6T 2A3

Tel. 604 222-1047
Fax. 604 222-1074

Printed in Canada
2009

Mind shift required! Looking for QMS Independence Day!

The TRIUMF Quality Management system still mostly works as depicted on the left of my little sketch.



Luckily I don't get paid by the artistic quality of my sketches! You may replace "QA Manager" with "QMS Implementation Panel Core", but not much has changed otherwise. In order to make the QM system work for TRIUMF, we need more independent drivers. Drivers who ask for directions instead of waiting for the whip. Please get involved!

Brought to you by the head of your friendly QMS Implementation Panel.

by Rolf Keitel

What is a nonconformity?

The glossary definition is that a nonconformity is a "non-fulfillment of a requirement", but what does that really mean?

Nonconformities are situations that require some form of corrective action. There are many types of nonconformities ranging from a light bulb that needs replacing to a serious accident involving injury. We have used our various fault reporting systems to initiate corrective actions for devices and this has worked extremely well over the years. However there are many other types of situations that require corrective action and while the fault reports were good places to report failed devices they aren't the best place to report other types of nonconformities. To address this, TRIUMF created a separate online nonconformity reporting system. Anyone with a TRIUMF trmail username and password can access this system and report a nonconformity. The link to this system can be found on the Quality Management section of the TRIUMF website.

Many people may be reluctant to report nonconformities because they don't want to point out the mistakes of others. These reports are not about assigning blame. Management needs to know about these situations so that corrective action can be taken. When reporting one you can choose to leave the names of people involved out of your report. Remember, it is best to think of this as a request for corrective action. The report only serves as a record so that progress of the corrective action can be tracked.

Many people may also be reluctant to report nonconformities because they are unsure that the situation is important enough to warrant it or they may be unsure if the situation should be reported as a fault. Ask yourself this question, "Should something be done about this?", if you answer yes, then report it! It doesn't matter if you report it as a nonconformity or as a fault, the QA Manager can change a nonconformity to a fault, and Operations Coordinators can do the reverse. Either way, a record is created and action will be taken.

What happens to a nonconformity after it is reported? The workflow is described in TSOP-02. The report is initially sent to the QA Manager who reviews the information and directs it to the appropriate division for corrective action. The QA Manager will also ask one of the trained TapRooT investigators to identify the root cause of the nonconformity. The Division Head will then assign the responsibility for developing corrective and preventive actions to address this root cause. The purpose of this

is to ensure that the cause of the situation is understood and action is taken to ensure that this cause is addressed and to prevent similar recurrences in the future. Once all the actions have been completed the Safety and QA Oversight Panel reviews the nonconformity, and actions taken, to verify their adequacy and closes the report. *by Phil Jones*

Waiting for our Audit Report Card

It brought back memories of being in school and having to discuss my report card with the teacher and my parents.

On Monday March 9th, three quality assurance auditors arrived from Ottawa in a flurry of snow. The auditors were at TRIUMF for the week to follow up on our 2006 audit. At the end of the week they would tell us how we did and then send a written report after returning to Ottawa. Despite the cold weather we had a warm welcome for them as they were introduced to Director Lockyer and Dr. Don Brooks of the TRIUMF Board of Management and the UBC Associate Vice President of Research.

Mr. Lawrence Colligan, lead auditor, and his colleagues Mr. Éric Desgagné and Ms. Kuen Sia, introduced the process by stating that their mission was "fact finding" and that their report would only be "evidence based". This meant they were looking for records of our processes. If we state that a drawing is approved before manufacture, we must be able to show them a record of approval (e.g. a signature) for that drawing. (It is this aspect of all audits that makes us put such emphasis on our documentation.)

TRIUMF staff made 14 presentations in the auditorium covering the 14 action items resulting from the 2006 audit. Dr. Brooks started the morning with an explanation of the governance structure of TRIUMF and Dr. Lockyer continued with the functional structure explaining the roles and responsibilities of the various committees that ensure the smooth operation of the laboratory. Other TRIUMF staff continued with presentations covering such topics as purchasing, work permitry, design, and records management. These presentations continued through to midday Tuesday while the auditors asked probing questions and identified areas where they wished to further investigate.

"Nonconformity reports are not about assigning blame."

Phil Jones is not only our "go to guy" but he is theirs as well, and they kept him hopping gathering information and arranging meetings with various TRIUMF staff. The auditors reviewed the calibration of radiation monitoring devices, the calibration of mechanical services devices, the issuance of work permits, and the practices of the design office and the machine shop, among other things. While not all these activities were up to their desired standard, some were exemplary. Well done John McKinnon, Jason Sargeant, & Rob Walker!

At the end of the week Lawrence and his colleagues gave us a verbal report. Overall the review went well. We knew that we had not made as much progress implementing our QMS as we had wanted, nor as much as they were expecting, and they told us this was the case. However, they were happy with what we had done and agreed with our plans for the remainder of the implementation. We anticipate the written report will find that 4 of the 14 issues found in the 2006 audit have been resolved.

In his summation, Lawrence also pointed out that before the end of the year the CNSC would be holding TRIUMF's mid-term licensing hearing where the commission determines whether to allow our operating license to stand for the remainder of the license term (another 2.5 years). Lawrence encouraged us to work hard in the next few months to make significant progress on the remaining 10 findings. If we provide sufficient evidence to him by August that we have resolved these issues he will be able to report this fact to the commission in the fall.

In short, we got a pat on the back and were told that we will pass if we don't slack off. (Nothing has changed in my report cards….)

The QMS core would like to thank all those that participated in the preparations for this visit, made presentations, or interacted with the auditors. Your efforts were well worth it! *by Ken Buckley*