



## Canadian Public Sector Quality Association Geographic Expansion Strategy

### Background

The Canadian Public Sector Quality Association (CPSQA) was established in 1996 as an independent, not-for-profit organization managed by volunteers from the federal, provincial/territorial, municipal and the broader public sector.

CPSQA has established a stable core of members over the years in the National Capital Region (NCR). The current group represents the various public sector areas, including the Federal, Provincial, Municipal, Education and Healthcare sectors. CPSQA also has a committed Board of Directors that has helped to guide the organization in growing the membership base and expanding the offerings to members, including networking meetings and the Ottawa Public Sector Quality Fair.

The Board of Directors and other interested parties have developed Vision and Mission statements as follows:

**Vision:** *How We Want To Be Seen*

Our vision is to be the recognized leader in fostering quality principles and practices in the public sector in Canada.

**Mission:** *What We Do*

Our mission is to expand the public service community interested in organizational improvement.

While examining its Vision and Mission during a strategic planning session, Directors recognized two key points:

- Most levels of the public sector are represented in many cities throughout Canada with a growing interest in the pursuit of excellence in a healthy workplace; and
- There is an opportunity to build on the strengths of CPSQA to enrich and benefit on a broader basis public sector quality practitioners and leaders. The key strengths identified were:
  - CPSQA is inclusive addressing all levels of government and the public sector at large;
  - CPSQA is unbiased in that no one approach is seen as the best, rather the Association exists to promote quality principles which are common to all approaches for the betterment of the public service as a whole;
  - CPSQA focuses on People: networking, sharing information, exchanging ideas and learning from each other; and
  - CPSQA is a “Partner in Improvement”, inspiring all those on the Quality Journey and those who want to get started and providing access to best practices from across the various sectors.

### Raison d’Être

CPSQA enables the connection between the various levels of government and within the levels of government to share practices and improve in a more cost-effective and timely fashion. **The ultimate outcomes are increased productivity and innovation from members of the public service.** By bringing together public servants seeking improvement and who work under a similar set of regulatory constraints, the sharing of information (and in some cases resources) will ensure that we are not all trying to re-invent the wheel but innovate from a common reference point.

The CPSQA raison d’être is to provide support to the public sector so that as individuals they are enabled to provide leadership to manage for excellence.

In his book "The Lexus and the Olive Tree", Thomas Friedman argues that "in the globalization system, one of the most important and enduring competitive advantages that a country can have today is a lean, effective, honest civil service."

The Clerk of the Privy Council has added, "In other words, public service matters, and an effective, efficient, accountable public service can be part of a country's comparative advantage." Economic, social and security outcomes are not preordained, but are inexorably affected by complex global influences; however, these outcomes are also importantly shaped by the strength of our public policies and institutions. The Clerk also said, "I believe we should make excellence our quest, and our brand. We need to provide leadership to manage for excellence and to foster effective teamwork in a creative, dynamic workplace."

## **Recent Developments**

Recent economic events in Canada and around the world place an even greater emphasis for the public sector to enhance the support it can provide to the private sector. Initiatives such as reducing the "Web of rules", "Enhancing Client Engagement", "Improving Service Delivery", "Simplifying Regulations", "Reducing Legislative Barriers" and others are all consistent with our CPSQA's emphasis on Quality/Excellence and process improvement.

CPSQA has been approached recently from different parts of the country by public servants interested in connecting with other Public servants who are engaged in Quality Management. The objective of proposed geographic expansion is to gain additional momentum on a National and Regional scale to enable more diverse networking opportunities for CPSQA members to connect, share and learn.

The chosen approach, after Board deliberations and discussions with interested parties, is to support the establishment of CPSQA Chapters in cities and regions across Canada.

In the spring of 2009, Directors decided to re-design the CPSQA website to ensure that there was a technology foundation in place to serve as a focal point for information exchange between chapters and members. It was also agreed to extend invitations to quality practitioners in two Canadian cities – Kingston, Ontario and Kelowna, British Columbia – to be pilot sites for the CPSQA geographic expansion initiative.

## **Expansion Strategy**

The approach to expand CPSQA's reach includes a number of carefully crafted elements to ensure that the value now delivered to members in the National Capital Region can be translated into the various chapters across the country. The following main components of the strategy are:

### **A. Organization Model:**

The proposed expansion model for CPSQA is to have a National Board of Directors with independent chapters set up in cities or regions that have an active contingent of public servants. Appendix A shows a diagram depicting the approach.

### **B. Chapter Identification:**

Chapter locations will be based upon two main criteria:

1. The cities or regions must have an active contingent of public servants from the various levels of the public service.
2. There must be a Chair and a Chapter board of volunteers, from a mix of public sector organizations, willing to coordinate events and represent CPSQA in the area. Board members will normally be an appropriate mix of active or former public servants and public service stakeholders.

### **C. Pilot Initiative:**

Based on specific interest and enquiries, the National Board of CPSQA decided to launch a pilot project to add two potential chapters to CPSQA in the summer of 2009. One would be centered in Kelowna to serve the greater Okanagan region in British Columbia and the other in Kingston to serve that area of Ontario.

#### **D. Central Support for Chapters:**

Chapters will receive the following support and tools from the National Organization:

##### **1. New Website:**

As a work in progress, the new website will provide:

- i. A Member Resource Centre in which quality and excellence information would be posted such as:
  - a. Presentations from past meetings;
  - b. Articles of interest;
  - c. Quality Tools; and
  - d. Presentations from the Ottawa Public Sector Quality Fairs beginning in 2007;
- ii. A dedicated page for each location where a Chapter Director is identified on which events of local interest such as chapter meetings will be posted;
- iii. A forum on which public servants would be able to post quality, healthy workplace excellence questions and comments of interest to fellow Members and others;
- iv. Member-only access to most of the more resourceful features of the new website, accessible only through login and passwords so that Members would have opportunities for access not open to the general public. This was considered reasonable since CPSQA Membership is currently free and readily available online. Non-Members wishing access to most website features would first have to join CPSQA before gaining access;
- v. Meeting registration capability with attendee list generation and attendance tracking from one meeting to the next ; and
- vi. Member sign-up capability with list sorting based on location.

The new website was launched July 1<sup>st</sup> but it is recognized it will take some additional time for all features to be in place.

##### **2. Chapter Organization Tools:**

Tools provided centrally by the National CPSQA organization to support the establishment and operation of chapters will include:

- i. Charter / terms of reference;
- ii. Roles and responsibilities for suggested Board positions;
- iii. Board meeting agenda and minutes templates;
- iv. Networking Meeting Evaluation Forms;
- v. Slide deck template;
- vi. Budget template;
- vii. Access to the CPSQA logo; and
- viii. Public Sector Quality Fair templates.

#### **E. Board Renewal**

In order for CPSQA to achieve its expansion vision, a larger, more representative board of directors will be needed to lead the effort. A revised roles and responsibilities document has been drafted with a targeted mix of representation from the various aspects of the public service. New Directors will be approached after being identified and vetted by the existing Board.

The Board renewal is expected to ensure there will be representatives from all three levels of government and two from the private sector. Consideration also is being given to having two “intern” positions reserved for public sector employees who aspire to managerial positions.

It is intended to hold a National Annual General Meeting in the latter half of 2009 where Directors will confirm Board positions for Directors. This will become an annual event.

**F. Promotion of CPSQA:**

- i. CPSQA will undertake, through its Quality Partners and National Board of Directors, an awareness campaign to make its presence and expansion plans better-known to other locations across Canada;
- ii. CPSQA will continue its partnership with NQI and will co-host the Ottawa Public Sector Quality Fair for the fourth year in a row in 2010. Consideration also will be given to seeking out partners in other centres and making the Public Sector Quality Fair templates available for holding “Fairs” at other locations. Initial discussions have been held for a potential Public Sector Quality Fair in Sudbury but no definite plans are yet in place. Clearly, consideration could be given in the future to holding such events in chapter locations across Canada. NQI has expressed a willingness to continue to be a co-host for such events.

**Conclusions**

There are many effective and efficient practices in the public sector that can be shared at all levels of government. Much of this work is done in isolation and there is very little opportunity for a regular sharing of best practices and lessons learned between levels of government and the broader public service. By providing this forum, quality practitioners and leaders can get together and share their ideas and experiences, leading to strengthened quality practices throughout the public service.

There is a real opportunity for CPSQA to both expand its services in the NCR and in other parts of Canada and also to expand its web-based services to Members. With an active nucleus of members and a committed board of Directors, CPSQA is ready for its next chapter.

Appendix A

