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THE NEW
CLASS OF
40 UNDER 40
2021

Bright futures await this year's class of 40 quality professionals under age 40

For centuries, astronomers have closely watched the night skies, looking for guidance on navigating oceans and planting crops, and searching for clues to man's existence in our vast universe. Some found patterns of stars and named these constellations to represent animals, people or other creatures. To this day, these collections can be a source of great inspiration and humbling awe.

Perhaps not quite to the level of those ancient constellations, we have our own stars among us on Earth who outshine others and inspire those around them. This year in our quality universe, we discovered and assembled a collection with undeniable star power quickly rising to the top: 40 quality professionals under the age of 40 making a difference.

The stars in our group come from all corners of the world and all sorts of professions and industries touching the quality discipline. With diverse backgrounds and impressive professional achievements, there's no doubt this group has high potential to soar to new heights in the years to come.

This is the third time QP has recognized a class of young, standout quality professionals. After previous installments—first in November 2011 (“40 New Voices of Quality”) and five years later in November 2016 (“Fresh Faces”)—it only made sense to set up our telescopes and do some searching this year.

In a nice bit of serendipity, this special feature aligns with World Quality Month—a time to showcase the quality profession and quality's impact on organizations and communities throughout the world—as well as ASQ's renewed efforts to connect and engage with the next generation of bright minds in the quality profession. See the sidebar “The Future Is Now” on p. 19 for more details on that initiative.

What appeared again this year was a group of up-and-comers demonstrating great passion and drive to lead quality into the future. This 2021 class is made up of innovators, disruptors, thinkers, doers and problem solvers—a similar breed as the previous classes and just as inspiring and motivating to us all. The pages that follow offer highlights on who these standouts are and perhaps glimpses on where they might be headed.

Clearly, this tribute magnifies the fact that this select group of talented quality professionals appears to be on the right trajectory to lead the profession.

—Mark Edmund, senior editor



MICHAEL ARJEV, 37

Program manager, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Education: Bachelor's degree in management, University of Maryland Global Campus, Adelphi.

Key accomplishments: Organized a quality assurance community of practice in his office; active member leader in local ASQ section; volunteer alumni mentor helping students prepare for and advance their careers; holds many certifications, including ASQ-certified manager of quality/operational excellence and quality improvement associate.

Quote: "Emerging technologies have the potential to bake quality into our daily work like the computer did in the preceding era. With technology as an enabling force to support empowered teams, quality could be more than just making consistent widgets or improvements to produce faster or cheaper."



EHSAN AYATI, 39

Quality manager, Pratt & Whitney Canada, Longueuil, Quebec.

Education: Master's degree in quality system engineering, Concordia University, Montreal.

Key accomplishments: Increased supplier quality performance; oversaw and participated in drafting clear quality control processes and metrics; worked with vendors to assess and improve their procedures and processes; enhanced coordination among testers, engineers and suppliers to reduce project validation delay; implemented a structured, judicious and successful approach to quality, improving defect and variability by a full sigma level.

Quote: "Major transformation is ongoing in quality and the quality profession, and I believe Quality 4.0 is the road map. We need more quality professionals with solid data science competency and the ability to navigate various enabling technologies."



AKWASI OPOKU BOADI, 29

Medical lab scientist, entrepreneur, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, Ghana; Jyoti Laboratories Ghana Ltd., Kumasi.

Education: Bachelor's degree in medical lab technology, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Key accomplishments: Led production designs and graphics for the Career School Tour; mentored high school students on careers; volunteered at the Atwima Foase Health Center to build lab capacity, initiate use of microscopes and train staff, among other activities; founded Jyotilabs; ASQ-certified Six Sigma Green Belt; American Society for Clinical Pathology-certified international medical laboratory scientist.

Quote: "Technology is fast evolving and so is the use of quality and quality tools. The kind of jobs we did with yesterday's methods might not even be worth trying in tomorrow's job market. In the next 25 years, there will be much better quality tools, making what we hold on to and cherish outmoded."



NYOTA BROWN, 36

Records manager, FST Logistics Inc., Columbus, OH.

Education: MBA, Johnson & Wales University, Providence Campus, RI.

Key accomplishments: Built the records management program for the City of Charlotte's engineering and property management department; served as president of Public Service Toastmaster; served as ASQ Government Division committee chair; led two cycles of process improvement design and implementation of new best practices.

Quote: "We are on the precipice of global change and the evolution of quality is bright. The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on markets and industry has spurred organizations to invest in research to increase their strategic advantages and resilience through design."



VINCENT BURRIS, 38

*Process consultant,
Mecklenburg
County Government,
Charlotte, NC.*

Education: Master's degree in leadership and organizational change management, Pfeiffer University, Misenheimer, NC.

Key accomplishments: Preliminary judge for the 2018 and 2019 ASQ International Team Excellence Awards; led two programs that won the 2021 National Association of Counties Awards; served on the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence Board of Examiners; ASQ Charlotte Section newsletter editor, treasurer and audit chair; ASQ-certified quality engineer and Six Sigma Black Belt, and Project Management Institute disciplined agile scrum master.

Quote: "My commitment to quality is my willingness to always lend a hand when and where my knowledge and skills are needed. The quality community is one in which local and international members must share their knowledge and experiences to continuously feed the curiosity, wants and needs of fellow and potential members."



KATIE CASTREE, 33

*Operations excellence manager,
Accumen, St. Louis.*

Education: Master's degree in health administration, Saint Louis University, Missouri.

Key accomplishments: Received many awards, including the Missouri Athletic Club 2019 Women of Distinction Rising Star award, the 2016 Robert Deufel Extra Measure Award, the 2017 Waldo Vezeau Technical Achievement Award from ASQ St. Louis Section 1304, and the 2016 Integrated Health Association Quality Excellence Achievement Award from the Illinois Hospital Association; reduced unnecessary collection of extra tubes of patient blood by 74%; TeamSTEPPS Master Trainer; past officer-secretary, social media chair and member of the conference planning committee for ASQ St. Louis Section 1304.

Quote: "Technology affects how healthcare administrators handle resources and manage organizations, and technological advancements contribute to this shift toward a patient-centered healthcare system. Quality supports this approach by identifying the customer and defining what is valuable to him or her, and [it] will only continue to increase in importance and prevalence."



ANDRÉ M. CARVALHO, 32

*Assistant professor, Polytechnic
Institute of Cávado and Ave,
Barcelos, Portugal.*

Education: Doctorate in engineering design and advanced manufacturing, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Portugal Program, Guimarães, Portugal.

Key accomplishments: Received many awards, including Best Poster Award—2016 Massachusetts Institute of

Technology Portugal program conference, first place in the Graduate Student Paper Competition—2018 North America Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Conference, Best Ph.D. Presentation Award—2019 European Organization for Quality Congress and the 2020 Riccardo dell'Anna Doctoral Dissertation Prize from the International Academy for Quality (IAQ); founding chair of the ASQ student branch at the University of Minho, Portugal; founder and co-chair of the Summer School on Quality and Organizational Excellence at the University of Minho.

Quote: "More than a commitment to customer happiness and excitement, I believe quality will increasingly become focused on societal expectations. Not only must organizations cater to customer requirements, but they also must meet our human efforts for a more inclusive, fair and sustainable society."



DENNIS DELISLE, 36

*Hospital executive,
Ohio State University
Wexner Medical Center,
Columbus.*

Education: Doctorate in health systems management, Tulane University, New Orleans.

Key accomplishments: Nationally recognized lean and change leadership expert; founded and oversees the master's degree program in operational excellence

at Thomas Jefferson University College of Population Health; led robust quality and operations improvement program leading to improved Vizient Overall Ranking from 34th in 2019 to sixth in 2020 out of 124 community hospitals nationally; accomplished author.

Quote: "The emphasis on wellness and prevention burdens healthcare providers with delivering quality, efficiency and reliability. Survival requires ongoing improvement; thriving demands a robust, systematic approach to continuous improvement and talent development. Bigger no longer is better—better is better. As such, organizations must strive to become the best at getting better!"



Congratulations **Dennis R. Delisle** for being nominated for ASQ's

Rising Star!



Dennis R. Delisle, Sc.D, FACHE

Executive Director, University Hospital at
The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Author of three books:

Lean Healthcare, 2nd Edition

Transformation and Your New HER

Executing Lean Improvements



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER



CAUCHY CHOI, 32

*Software quality engineer,
Verily Life Sciences,
South San Francisco.*

Education: Master's degree in computer science, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Key accomplishments: Improves quality of implantable cardiac medical devices; streamlines quality activities by automating quality inspection or moving quality upstream into design; leverages world-class development processes and incorporates them into a regulated environment.

Quote: "Sometimes there is the notion that the quality function is just the bad cop that demands burdensome documentation, which slows down engineering. Instead, quality should be a valued partner that helps to actually enable and increase the speed of development while not compromising safety or effectiveness."



ALLYSON DAVIS, 35

*Quality system engineer,
CryoLife Inc., Kennesaw, GA.*

Education: Bachelor of sciences degree in biology, University of West Georgia in Carrollton.

Key accomplishments: Reduced backlog of past-due corrective and preventive actions (CAPA) and remediated historical CAPAs by investigating the issues using root cause analysis (RCA), gathering subject matter experts to perform the actions and ensuring the actions were successful; organized teams to discuss current issues with changing regulations, industry best practices and how to use RCA tools; ASQ-certified quality auditor.

Quote: "My commitment to quality is as strong as my commitment to continuous learning and sharing my experiences and knowledge with others. Now that I am part of the ASQ community, this only provides greater opportunities to learn and share with others."

Selecting Our Stars

Our search for these "Rising Stars" started in May when we asked readers to nominate friends, colleagues and even themselves via an online questionnaire. The short questionnaire requested details about the nominee's personal story, professional achievements and community impact.

Dozens and dozens of nominations streamed in, mostly from colleagues of the nominees. Editors reviewed the nominations and followed up with each one to confirm and clarify information, as well as ask additional questions before narrowing the list to 40. Honorees were selected based on their professional accomplishments, demonstrated leadership and industry/community contributions.



MEMOREX DE GUZMAN, 39

*Group quality manager, Unique Group,
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE).*

Education: Bachelor's degree in civil engineering, University of the East, Manila, Philippines.

Key accomplishments: Received 2019 Leader of the Year in Unique Group's global employee excellence program; responsible for the overall integrated management systems for Unique Group's head office and Middle East operations; as chair of the ASQ UAE Section, he hosts webinars on trending quality topics, facilitates discussion groups, coaches and mentors colleagues, and organizes member events.

Quote: "Advancements in data and analytics, applications development, systems connectivity and machine learning will be amplified as the demand for automation, predictive assessment, prescriptive analytics, and the amalgamation of quality tools into business systems and operations become even more vital to improve compliance, satisfy customers and increase efficiency."



SHANE FLICKINGER, 34

*Vice president, operations,
Thomas Jefferson University
Hospitals, Philadelphia.*

Education: Master's degree in health science,
Penn State College of Health and Human Development,
State College, PA.

Key accomplishments: Developed and instructs several
graduate-level courses; facilitated emergency department

(ED) facility and care model redesign, reducing ED
length of stay by 12.6%; oversaw project execution
and education of more than 90 certified change
agents, leading to a 200% increase in employee
participation in change leadership education and
a 100% increase in certified change agents; fellow
of the American College of Healthcare Executives;
gives back to the community through mentorship,
teaching, writing and presenting.

Quote: "My professional satisfaction and drive
come from knowing I have positively impacted
the lives of patients and families through my work
in educating, coaching and mentoring frontline
clinicians and staff in quality tools and concepts,
and change leadership methods."

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ASQ 40 Under 40.

Congratulations to nominee

Shane Flickinger,
MHA, FACHE, CLSSBB

Vice President of Operations, Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals



JeffersonHealth.org

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ASHLEY CHILDRESS, 32

*Senior statistician, Eastman
Chemical Co., Kingsport, TN.*

Education: Master's degree in statistical process control, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg.

Key accomplishments: Taught quality professionals to use data to understand and diagnose the health of processes; led the first major revision of Eastman's quality curriculum in more than a decade; promotes the inclusion of women in Eastman, IT, and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); served in multiple leadership positions for the ASQ Chemical and Process Industries Division.

Quote: "Data availability, speed and quantity are like never before and therefore will require modern approaches. Quality methods certainly will continue expanding and evolving to better tackle the unique challenges inherent in these data. However, I suspect that traditional quality and statistical methods will continue to be invaluable to understanding processes and systems."



MARTHE-ENA GUERRIER, 30

*Process consultant,
Mecklenburg
County Government,
Charlotte, NC.*

Education: Bachelor's degree in systems engineering, University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

Key accomplishments: Developed tracking and measurement systems using desktop tools to enhance measurement capabilities of back-office operations; developed and implemented robust operation strategies using tools such as 5S and *kanban* to increase production efficiency; ASQ-certified lean Six Sigma Green Belt; 2021 ASQ Charlotte Section secretary; ASQ Government Division media chair-elect.

Quote: "With time, people appreciate quality more and more. What used to be a nice-to-have is now a must-have. In 25 years, I see quality being at the center of all industries."



KIRSTIN GREEN, 34

*Quality associate, lead auditor,
Discovery Life Sciences (DLS),
Powell, OH.*

Education: Bachelor's degree in physical and biological anthropology, Ohio State University, Columbus.

Key accomplishments: Developed scalable processes for a previous employer's project management and lab

teams; oversees audit and CAPA programs at labs across the country; helped DLS attain the accreditations needed to continue expanding in a global market; upgraded DLS to better compliance for industry by achieving ISO 13485 accreditation and implementing regular quality management system (QMS) metrics analysis; cofounded the charity Love Machine.

Quote: "My father was a quality manager in steel manufacturing. I learned many quality concepts from him almost by osmosis. The concept of small positive change also was reflected in the motto from my days as a Girl Scout—to 'leave it better than you found it.' My hope is that I can teach the next generation how to apply this powerful maxim to their lives."

The Future Is Now

The future of every professional society is the next generation of its members. Research shows that most members join a professional membership organization early in their careers—as a student, a new graduate, or within the first five years of employment.¹ This points to a significant opportunity for ASQ to focus on early careerists' top priorities to boost member recruitment.

"We finally have a dedicated focus to attract, engage and retain NextGen members to breathe new energy into the organization and to support sustainability for generations to come," said Kristen Spriggs, ASQ's chief member services officer, referring to the strategic initiative identified by the ASQ Board of Directors in the organization's 2021–2022 strategic plan.

The objective of this initiative is to connect and engage NextGen quality professionals and volunteer leaders including student chapters, geographic and technical communities through modern ways of participation and learning. The goal is to enhance the NextGen member experience by educating them on different paths, enhancing their skills, giving them career support and providing network building with individuals on the same path.

In the recent ASQ Member Satisfaction Survey, results showed that young professionals strongly valued all resources aimed toward helping them plan for and move their career forward—63% indicated this was originally their main driver to join ASQ. The member benefits that were most valued and ranked as the most used for this group centered around certification, certification preparation, training and education.

ASQ has formed three NextGen subcommittees around this initiative:

1. NextGen Student Branches Subcommittee.
2. NextGen Mentoring Subcommittee.
3. NextGen Global Advocacy Subcommittee.

"It's an exciting time to be a young professional member of ASQ," Claire Hopkins and Kylee Rogers, co-chairs of the NextGen Global Advocacy Subcommittee, said in a joint statement. "There are many new strategic initiatives focused on modernizing the society to help us in our journey as quality professionals. ASQ is definitely a place I want to be!"

ASQ wants to give the rising stars in quality every opportunity to shine, to become the brightest stars imaginable. The NextGen initiative is for them, the future of ASQ. To get involved in the NextGen initiative or serve as a mentor, email nextgen@asq.org.

REFERENCE

1. David Miller, Brad Bennett and Tirrah Switzer, "Industry Study: Association Trends 2020—From Disruption to Opportunity: What Members Want and How Virtual Engagement Is Creating New Paths for Growth," Community Brands whitepaper, 2020, <https://tinyurl.com/p4zvnmdz>.



SUNIL KUMAR V. KAUSHIK, 38

Customer experience manager, Microsoft; author, freelance innovation consultant, Bengaluru, India.

Education: Master's degree in nuclear physics, Kuvempu University, Karnataka, Bangalore.

Key accomplishments: ASQ-certified Six Sigma Black Belt; ASQ Influential Voices author; TEDx speaker; invented Atheena, a generative artificial intelligence (AI); cycled from Thailand to Portugal lecturing at universities and conducting quality improvement consulting assignments; designed a framework that combines TRIZ and lean Six Sigma to execute Six Sigma projects 10 to 30 times faster; designed a training technique that teaches lean and Six Sigma using origami.

Quote: "I am working on building AI that can help humans with cognitive work. It can be creative and help humans come up with creative solutions. By doing so, humans will add true value by accepting or rejecting the solutions based on the experience it delivers and spend less time collecting knowledge from various domains and industries to arrive at solutions."



NADIA KHAMASSI, 24

Quality technician, Generac Power Systems, Appleton, WI.

Education: Associate's degree in electrical engineering, Fox Valley Technical College, Grand Chute, WI.

Key accomplishments: Local ASQ section secretary and leads social media outreach; led a Green Belt project using quality tools and concepts to understand processes and identify improvement opportunities; improved alternator assembly quality by establishing data collection and analysis, performing RCA and implementing process controls.

Quote: "The world is evolving with new technologies and automated systems. As the newer generation, we must adapt to these changes and come up with new strategies to improve our QMSs to achieve business efficiency and sustainability."



KARI KRUGER, 31

Reliability engineer, Abbott Laboratories, Fort Worth, TX.

Education: Bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station.

Key accomplishments: Initiates, investigates and closes process deviations associated with cell therapy manufacturing; creates quality standard operating procedures to escalate potential customer problems; created a new-hire onboarding process to expedite the speed at which employees competently work in the lab; implemented *kanban*, training programs and ordering procedures that help employees successfully abide by quality protocols.

Quote: "Over the next 25 years, quality will evolve to ensure that customers not only receive a dependable product but also that the product exceeds expectations."



KAMILA LESNIAK, 30

Quality and continuous improvement manager, Westfalia North America, Hartford, CT.

Education: MBA, University of Hartford, CT; master's degree in technology management—lean manufacturing and Six Sigma, Central Connecticut State University, New Britain.

Key accomplishments: Mentors young women and encourages them to pursue STEM careers in a male-dominated field; has been promoted from a quality intern to multiple positions within quality, such as quality engineer, quality manager, and quality and continuous improvement manager.

Quote: "It is difficult to predict what kinds of changes will occur in the future. Still, it is reasonable to expect that the quality evolution trend will continue to improve with changes in technology. Customers always will want higher standards. Organizations must now implement a stronger quality focus into their strategic goals to satisfy customers when technological development is evolving faster."



TEJASWI MATERLA, 33

Assistant professor of project management, Penn State University, Philadelphia.

Education: Doctorate in engineering/industrial management, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla.

Key accomplishments: Research focuses on improving patient satisfaction in healthcare using the Kano Model; research has contributed to the development of a reliable method for identifying characteristics that improve patient service quality; published in several internationally renowned journals; received the 2019 Riccardo dell'Anna Doctoral Dissertation Prize from IAQ; received the 2016 Herbert McMahon Educational Grant from ASQ St. Louis Section 1304.

Quote: "I hope to continue to conduct research developing new quality methods and enhancing the existing ones that allow organizations to incorporate quality into their identity and culture. As an educator, I aim to equip students with the necessary skills and practical experience required in the industry and mold them into ethical quality professionals."

This year in our quality universe, we discovered and assembled a collection of individuals with undeniable star power quickly rising to the top.



W. FRAZIER PRUITT, 35

*Senior engineer and
quality assurance
supervisor, Southco Inc.,
Rochester, NY.*

Education: MBA from Indiana University and the University of Manchester.

Key accomplishments: Author of several *Quality Progress* articles; vice chair/chair-elect of ASQ Rochester Section; BSI-certified ISO 9001:2015 lead auditor;

ASQ-certified Six Sigma Black Belt and quality engineer; voting member of U.S. Technical Advisory Group to International Organization for Standardization/Technical Committee 176; lean Six Sigma facilitator for Greater Rochester (NY) Quality Council.

Quote: “My mission is to inspire and empower excellence in organizations through proactive quality and continuous improvement. My personal mission statement has gone through a number of iterations over the years, and may yet again, but I feel that it accurately describes the impact I work to have on my local and broader quality community. By inspiring and empowering excellence in people, I can have a wider reach in the pursuit of proactive quality and continuous improvement.”



RASHA NASSAR, 38

*Technical program manager,
Snowflake, San Jose, CA.*

Education: Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, San Jose State University, CA.

Key accomplishments: 16 years of experience in leading transformational programs in a wide variety of industries, including software, space systems, medical devices and energy; ASQ-certified Six Sigma Black Belt; various project management professional certifications.

Quote: “My contribution to the quality community is the application of quality concepts and tools in different industries: medical devices, space systems, energy, internet and software. Quality concepts are applicable everywhere. Over the next 25 years, I see quality coming to the forefront of every organization's mind when it comes to balancing quality, cost and time. I see myself continuing to grow and apply the quality fundamental concepts in different applications. I also see myself sharing the knowledge and experience I gained over the years with young professionals.”

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Honeoye Falls, NY,
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MADHUSMITA NAYAK, 37

Senior strategy and business planning officer, Ports, Customs and FreeZone Corp., Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Education: Bachelor's degree in technology, electronics and telecommunications from the Institute of Technical Education and Research, Bhubaneswar, Odisha in India.

Key accomplishments: Member of ASQ leadership team in the United Arab Emirates; KPI Institute-certified KPI Professional; certified European Foundation for Quality Management assessor; KPMG-certified Six Sigma Green Belt; member of ASQ Global Diversity and Inclusion Task Force; recipient of Inspiring Women Business Leader Award 2021 from the Women Leadership Summit in Dubai; recipient of the Distinguished Leadership Award at International Education Summit and Awards in 2020.

Quote: "As a continuous improvement practitioner, I will be prepared for a rapidly evolving future of work. I will acquire new skills that are in demand and will need to rethink traditional notions of where they work, how they work, and what skills and capabilities they bring to that work. With this, I will use my skills and knowledge to create a better quality of life and make this world a better place."

Clearly, this tribute magnifies the fact that this select group of talented quality professionals appears to be on the right trajectory to lead the profession.



MICHAEL OWENS, 35

Quality manager, Precision Turning Specialties, Morristown, TN.

Education: Bachelor of science degree in engineering technology/product development, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City.

Key accomplishments: ASQ-certified quality engineer (CQE); subject matter expert reviewing in-work CQE prep course content; accomplished machinist with machine tool technology/machinist degree from Tennessee College of Applied Technology.

Quote: "As W. Edwards Deming said, 'Quality is everyone's responsibility.' It is my mission as a quality professional to lead others with that in mind. I will continue using my experience from previous roles to relate to the challenges that others face each day while trying to satisfy production commitments without sacrificing quality by teaching them how their roles directly impact product quality and by involving them in problem-solving events that allow them to voice their opinions and help drive continuous improvement activities."



MICHAEL PARENT, 31

Lean Six Sigma Black Belt, AAA, Canton, OH.

Education: MBA from the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

Key accomplishments: Author of several articles in *Quality Progress* and *Lean and Six Sigma Review*; author of *The Lean Innovation Cycle* (Taylor and Francis, 2021); certified Master Black Belt (MBB) from Lawrence Technological University, Southfield, MI; Bridgestone Americas-certified Design for Six Sigma Black Belt and Green Belt.

Quote: "I'm both a thought leader and practitioner. As an MBB, I work to improve human resources operations and share the impact quality has on the organization and its individuals. I share 'the quality gospel' by understanding issues of in-process quality and rework. We're not only building a productive organization, but also improving the employees' lives and building commitment and engagement."



SHALINI PATHAK, 33

Quality team leader, Teleperformance, Delhi, India.

Education: Bachelor's degrees in applied science and biological sciences, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Awadh University, Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Key accomplishments: Four years of experience in quality; 10 years overall experience; Teleperformance-certified Six Sigma Green Belt; plan-do-check-act trained; twice recognized as best quality assurance/star performer and employee of the year by Teleperformance.

Quote: "I am putting all of my efforts 100% into learning, searching, growing and distributing all of my learning and knowledge to those who willingly want to learn. For myself, I always use the 80/20 rule to approach the next level of learning and knowledge—always with extra effort and mindfulness."



JAYET MOON, 33

Quality engineering lead, Terumo Medical Corp., Philadelphia.

Education: Master's degree in biomedical engineering, Drexel University, Philadelphia.

Key accomplishments: ASQ Delaware Section chair; author of *Foundations of Quality Risk Management* (Quality Press, 2021); fellow of International Institute of Risk & Safety Management; fellow of Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce; ASQ-certified quality engineer, supplier quality professional and quality improvement associate.

Quote: "Quality 4.0 is real, and it's here to stay. Quality must grow in alignment with digitization, digitalization and digital transformation going on all around us. The way we collect, process and analyze data is changing. Industry 4.0 will only pick up speed and become more mainstream, and it's our job to ensure we leverage the advantages of 4.0 for better quality management. Risk management, decision making, cybernetics, cyber-physical systems, adaptive learning and data analytics will all be a part of this paradigm."



SOLOMON PUEKE, 32

Senior engineer, service assurance, 9mobile, Nigeria.

Education: Master's degree in technology and industrial engineering, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, India.

Key accomplishments: For two years, chaired a "Catch Them Young" program that helps middle school students develop an interest in IT in school; ASQ-certified quality engineer and quality process analyst.

Quote: "As a quality professional, I have acquired formal and informal training, tech-savvy, and transferable skills such as leadership, communication, innovation and systems thinking, with the ability to work across various fields. With the introduction of new technology, the need for flawless processes remains the same, if not more important. I will be able to use my knowledge to manage quality with digital tools and also educate the next generation on quality management and implementation of new processes and strategies that will be vital to business operations."



KYLEE ROGERS, 30

Supplier quality professional, Young Living Essential Oils, Orem, UT.

Education: Associate's degree in business administration, management and operations, Utah Valley University, Orem.

Key accomplishments: Arrangements chair with ASQ Salt Lake Section; co-chair of ASQ NextGen Committee; ASQ-certified supplier quality professional and quality auditor.

Quote: "I have a deep belief that every process—human or otherwise—can be improved by someone who wants to make a difference. As quality continues to evolve, I hope to be on the front lines of recruitment and knowledge-sharing. This is an amazing industry, full of people who are trying to make their worlds a little better and there's room for everyone in a mission like that. I hope to be instrumental in growing the quality field through my work with the ASQ NextGen initiative and local networking. The goal of a quality professional is always to get other people's buy-in. The more people we have on our team, the better!"



PUNIT SHETTY, 34

Engineer, TeamWorld Inc., Binghamton, NY.

Education: Master's degree in industrial and systems engineering, State University of New York at Binghamton.

Key accomplishments: Binghamton University-certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt; active ASQ member since 2014; has quickly transitioned his role from being a member at large for ASQ Binghamton Section in 2019 to website administrator in 2020 and section chair in 2021; member of Institute of Industrial Engineers.

Quote: "Volunteering in quality organizations such as ASQ and conducting techno-social events helps in the promotion and growth of the quality concepts. I do not see quality as just a bunch of quality tools. I believe and try to implement quality in the communication and interaction with peers, subordinates, and higher-ups. This promotes quality in the individuals' performance and, ultimately, the growth of the organization."



KARINA RODRIGUEZ, 32

Good practice auditor and Food Safety Modernization Act consultant, Rx Research Services (RxRS) CRO, Glendale, CA.

Education: Master's degree in food science and technology, Chapman University, Orange, CA.

Key accomplishments: First registered apprentice placed by the RxRS, Unilateral Apprenticeship Committee to the Food Industry's small to midsize food manufacturers in southern

California; holder of four food, quality and safety certifications; chair of ASQ NextGen Mentoring Group; co-chair of ASQ NextGen Events Pacific Region; member of ASQ Workforce Development-Education Division; member of ASQ's Communities of Excellence Food, Drug and Cosmetics Division; committee member of new professionals for the Southern California Institute of Food Technologists.

Quote: "The RxRs Foundation (while in partnership with ASQ as volunteers) and I already have embarked on their journey to educate and mentor the next generation to reduce the economic equality and information gap and increase social equity, enhance the quality of life for many families and workers by providing the education necessary (with quality as the driving force) to have fulfilling careers in an ever-increasing digital world."



DARA SOBATI, 29

Quality engineer, Keysight Technologies, Santa Rosa, CA.

Education: Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, University of California, Davis.

Key accomplishments: Completed a Keysight Technologies Lean Six Sigma Green Belt program as well as computer numerical control milling course during night school; tutors and volunteers for various young professionals' panels, using these forums to mentor the next generation of engineers.

Quote: "At my work environment, I see the evolution of quality manifesting itself in becoming more involved with process engineering. By gaining a more in-depth knowledge of each process, a quality engineer should be able to solve problems more efficiently. I also can imagine quality having a stronger role in metrology and measurement correlation efforts. It is invaluable for a manufacturing facility to have metrology data correlation among its various process areas. Being engaged with every process area, quality can have an impactful role in such efforts."



EKATERINA SPIRIDONOVA, 34

Head of operational excellence and quality, PostNord, Solna, Sweden.

Education: Bachelor's degrees in supply chain management and international relations from the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki.

Key accomplishments: Publications chair for the ASQ Lean Enterprise Division; certified Black Belt and Master Black Belt; member of the technical program committee for the Lean Six Sigma Conference; presented at Lean and Six Sigma Conference in 2019 and 2020.

Quote: "Over the past seven years, my career commitment, as well as my personal interests, have focused on promoting quality, disseminating its methods and helping to develop advanced methods that are more appropriate in this age of disruptive change from digital proliferation and its associated quality challenges."



STEPHANIE THOMPSON, 39

Quality improvement specialist, principal, Crowned Bridge LLC, Huntington Beach, CA.

Education: Master's degree in technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, Arizona State University, Tempe.

Key accomplishments: Started as ASQ student member and continued involvement in ASQ's Section Affairs Council, local section and various divisions; vice chair of students for ASQ Quality Management Division; past secretary of ASQ Human Development and Leadership Division; past vice chair of ASQ Phoenix Section; vice chair of ASQ Orange Empire Section; ASQ-certified Six Sigma Green Belt and quality auditor; member of Southwest Alliance for Excellence 2015 Performance Excellence Program Board of Examiners.

Quote: "I absolutely enjoy and love assisting organizations in transformation. This includes strategic planning, streamlining processes and eliminating nonvalue-added activities to impact the bottom line. To be frank, that's not what really does it for me. What I see as my contribution to my community and commitment to quality is sharing the know-how with the next generation because they are our future and the seeds planted today will flourish tomorrow!"



TYLER THOMPSON, 32

Quality assurance engineer, Washington River Protection Solutions, Richland.

Education: Bachelor's degree in civil engineering, University of Portland, Oregon.

Key accomplishments: Quality assurance leader, professional and project lead on vital systems and equipment for Washington River Protection Solutions at Hanford Nuclear Site in Richland;

subject matter expert for commercial grade dedication and qualified supplier registry; participates in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program at local grade schools.

Quote: "In the future, I see myself continuing on the path of being a sound leader and manager by giving guidance/mentorship to colleagues around me and providing examples of where one might expect challenges and learning opportunities throughout a project. During a project's life cycle, there always is something to learn. Having a questioning attitude and asking even the simplest questions can make the world of difference in identifying a problem as early as possible and facilitating a solution more quickly."



NGO CONG TRUONG, 35

Founder and professional director, John&Partners Consulting and Education, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam.

Education: Doctorate in philosophy, business administration and management, European University Business School.

Key accomplishments: ASQ fellow; first ASQ Country Counselor in Vietnam; ASQ-certified Master Black Belt; delivers more than 100 training courses and 50 quality and improvement projects each year related to quality management, lean, Six Sigma, *kaizen* and operational excellence for companies in Vietnam and the Asia Pacific.

Quote: "My dream is to set up a training institution and consulting firm for the benefit of quality aspirants, to whom quality would be taught using extremely simple quality tools and techniques blended with technology. I strive to develop strategies that make a lasting impact on the people they touch. I am mindful of the challenges that come with implementing change, but I'm steadfast in the belief of the principles."



NICOLE WONG, 28

Director of family support services at Family Services, Poughkeepsie, NY; clinician at Teamer Counseling, and live support specialist at Columbia University's School of Social Work, New York City.

Education: Master's degree in social work from Columbia University.

Key accomplishments: Seven years experience providing survivor-centered support and advocacy to individuals impacted by sexual abuse and relationship violence; involved with the quality assurance and course development initiatives over the past year and a half.

Quote: "I wholeheartedly believe that we always have room to grow and something to learn, and I believe quality provides all of us with the opportunity to continue being our best selves and pushing us to be the best versions of ourselves. It opens up conversations to elicit feedback and ways to improve, and solidifies the concept of always being a work in progress, or always having fluidity in the work that we do."



RICHARD WORTHY, 34

*Quality control manager,
Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co.,
Marietta, GA.*

Education: Master's degree in management, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, FL.

Key accomplishments: Manager for the C-130J program assembly operations quality control team, overseeing 33

inspectors, two supervisors and two quality control analysts; mentors college students and peers through Lockheed Martin Aero Marietta General Manager's mentorship program; ASQ-certified quality engineer and Lockheed Martin 21 Black Belt; supports F-35 program quality control inspection team; recipient of Lockheed Martin Aero Star Award.

Quote: "Supporting the warfighter means a great deal to me not only because I work in the defense industry, but also because of family members who have served in the Armed Forces. My team is directly responsible for the quality of this aircraft, and it's critical that it is mission capable every time. I take great pride in ensuring that my team and I do everything that we possibly can to ensure that we are producing the highest quality aircraft."



PIOTR WRONKA, 39

*Quality control team lead,
Rubberatkins, Greater
Aberdeen area, United
Kingdom.*

Education: Master's degree in production management and engineering, University of Bielsko-Biala, Poland.

Key accomplishments: Quality professional for 15 years; currently leads nine-member quality team; International Association for Six Sigma Certification-certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt; International Register of Certificated Auditors-certified ISO 9001 lead auditor; Chartered Quality Institute Chartered Quality Professional.

Quote: "Process improvement is what drives me the most. Different problems and non-monotonous tasks are things that make this job very interesting. My next career move is going to be toward process improvements and delivering quality leadership in a well-developed organization that puts great emphasis on improvements. I would like to see myself as a quality professional programming robots to perform 100% accurate operations. I always remind myself that we must invest, invest and invest to get ahead of the competition and win more projects."



INEZ ZWETSLOOT, 33

*Assistant professor, department
of advanced design and systems
engineering, City University of
Hong Kong.*

Education: Doctorate in business and industrial statistics, University of Amsterdam.

Key accomplishments: Six Sigma trainer; award-winning teacher of courses on engineering management, data visualization, quality engineering and Industry 4.0; authored articles that appeared in *Journal of Quality Technology* and *Quality Engineering* (QE); member of QE editorial review board and ASQ Publications Management Board; recipient of 2021 Young Statistician Award from the European Network for Business and Industrial Statistics.

Quote: "In the next 25 years, we will see teams where multiple experts work together; you will need system specialists, data specialists, engineers and quality experts to solve quality problems together. Especially data science will have an impact on quality. A lot more information is readily available for the quality practitioner who can deal with the data effectively. Hence, quality practitioners must equip themselves with (at the minimum) some basic data processing, handling and analysis skills." **QP**