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## **CPS HR Consulting and ASQ Government Division Discover Lack of Lean and Quality Improvement Practices in Government**

*Recent Survey Finds Only One-Third of Government Offices Use Lean and Quality Improvement Techniques*

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. – March 28, 2017** – A recent survey, conducted jointly by [CPS HR Consulting](#) and the [American Society for Quality \(ASQ\) Government Division](#), found that the use of lean and quality improvement techniques is limited to small pockets of government operations. The survey concludes that its limited use is the result of it not being a required and ongoing management practice, despite significant positive benefits from the application of these techniques in government.

“Based on the survey results, it is clear that lean and quality practices are only used in short cycles, and in about one-third of all government offices,” said Richard Mallory, a former chair of the ASQ, and leader of this survey project. “The use of lean and quality improvement tools as a temporary ‘fix’ denies government its greatest hope of across-the-board improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.”

ASQ commissioned the survey as a part of its sustainability initiative that seeks to make the use of lean and quality techniques a fundamental practice in government. These practices embrace a broad body of professional knowledge focused on doing work right the first time – by first establishing process output, or “customer,” requirements and routinely measuring results to fine-tune and error-proof work methods. Lean and quality practices have origins in the Toyota Production System of the 1970s and are one of the primary factors for enhanced automobile quality since that time.

CPS HR Consulting is a human resources and management consulting firm that specializes in solving the unique problems and challenges faced by government and non-profit agencies. It sponsored the current study as a part of its practice in program and process improvement.

Although the application of these techniques could greatly improve work efficiency, the survey found that employees fear job loss or demotion from possible process improvements, and that removing this misconception is the major issue confronting both legislators and government executives.

“Development of a senior manager strategy to prevent job loss by their most capable employees will be necessary to enable the promise of efficiency and effectiveness in government. Otherwise, opportunities to improve will never be elevated to the attention of management.

“There appears to be a significant Catch-22 in the implementation of lean and quality practices in government since it requires employees in each program area to identify and implement efficiencies that could eliminate or downgrade their own jobs, or the jobs of close colleagues.

Until higher level managers protect innovative employees from harming their own career, it appears that participation in these practices will be muted,” Mallory said.

The survey found significant positive results from the application of lean and quality techniques. Among the 24 teams reporting results, there was a 61 percent reduction in process steps and a 60 percent reduction in process time. Application of these practices and techniques also reportedly led to a 19 percent reduction in error rates.

“It is not impossible to assume that these improvement rates, when projected across-the-board in government, could result in correspondingly high reductions in the overall cost of government. But such results will only come about if management can require sustained use of lean and quality practices, and can create a scorecard to show whether each manager and supervisor is carrying through on this responsibility,” Mallory said.

ASQ recommends the use of its Process Management Standards and System Management Standard as a primary means of creating such a scorecard, and as outlined in the book, “Auditable Quality Standards for Highly Effective Government.” These standards are also available at no cost in the ASQ online library at <http://asq.org/gov/quality-information/library/>.

Additionally, ASQ is challenging government agencies to join in the effort to promote a quality scorecard as a routine practice in all government operations and a means of achieving excellence of service at the lowest possible cost. The Division leadership will be reviewing and updating its Auditable Quality Standards as a part of its annual meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina, on April 30.

To view and download the report, visit: [http://www.cpshr.us/resources\\_whitepapers.html](http://www.cpshr.us/resources_whitepapers.html).

To continue to work on improvement initiatives, human resource professionals can visit [http://www.cpshr.us/training\\_center/](http://www.cpshr.us/training_center/) and sign up for one of CPS HR’s training courses.

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### **About CPS HR Consulting**

CPS HR Consulting, based in Sacramento, California, is a self-supporting public agency providing a full range of integrated HR solutions to government and nonprofit clients across the country. CPS HR consultants have expertise in the areas of organizational strategy, recruitment and selection, classification and compensation, and training and development. For more information, visit [www.cpshr.us](http://www.cpshr.us) or connect with them on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Google Plus](#).

### **About ASQ**

ASQ is a global community of people dedicated to quality who share the ideas and tools that make our world work better. With almost 80,000 individual and organizational members of the community in 150 countries, ASQ has the reputation and reach to bring together the diverse quality champions who are transforming the world’s corporations, organizations and communities to meet tomorrow’s critical challenges. ASQ is headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with national service centers in China, India, Mexico and a regional service center in the United Arab Emirates. Learn more about ASQ’s members, mission, technologies and training at [asq.org](http://asq.org).

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