



**LIKE SANDS THROUGH  
AN HOURGLASS ...  
PART ONE**

by Jo Haberstok

The rest of it usually goes "...so are the days of our lives."

Apropos as 2025 comes to an end and we embark on a new year once again.

Remember, your best resolution is the one you can keep on your worst week. There's no point in creating a long list of great ideas that you already probably know either aren't really achievable or that they aren't going to be achieved by you. Be honest.

I read this in an online article by Daniel W. Chen last week: "New Year's resolutions have a reputation problem. They're like gym memberships: bought with hope in January, used with guilt in February, and quietly abandoned by March - while the credit card keeps getting charged." (apologies to all you gym folks)

Studies consistently show that over 80% of New Year's resolutions fail, with the steepest drop-off occurring within the first six to eight weeks. Meaning most resolutions don't even make it to Valentine's Day. It's not because people aren't well meaning when they first set them. It's usually because the plans just weren't built to survive real life.

The best resolutions or goals, whether for New Year's or any time) are usually those that are:

- achievable
- measurable
- flexible

If you are looking for ideas for some reasonable, can-do resolutions, check out this article: [100 Achievable New Year's Resolutions for 2026](#).

**LIKE SANDS THROUGH AN HOURGLASS ...  
PART TWO**

It felt appropriate to use that quote this month, as the sands are now slowly pouring into the bottom of the hourglass for our Columbia Basin ASQ section as well.

There's really nothing major to report at this time, but we promised to keep our members informed as the section dissolution process moves ahead, so that's what we are doing.

The dissolution proposal was presented to and approved by the ASQ Geographic Community Council (GCC) at their December 12 meeting. It will now be submitted to the ASQ Board of Directors at their next meeting, which I believe will be in January or February. After that, and assuming approval, I'm guessing that ASQ will begin the process of reviewing our current membership list and determining – based on geographic locations – which ASQ section members will be reassigned to. Those of us who reside in the Tri-Cities area, where our section has been based, will likely become part of the Spokane section, since it's the closest one. Members residing in the Yakima area may be assigned to the Seattle section or possibly the Cascades PNW (Portland/Vancouver) section. (As always, members will still have the option to select which section they want to join.)

With these changes coming – and also because it's always fun to check out what other ASQ sections are doing – here are the links to the other nearby sections' myASQ community pages: [Spokane ASQ](#) - [Cascades PNW ASQ](#) - [Seattle ASQ](#)

Wishing you all a very Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!!



## Invitation from ASQ Phoenix Section January 8, 2026 Virtual Webinar

**DATE:**

Thursday,  
January 8, 2026

## Adventures with AI: Turning Data into Insights

This is a virtual/online webinar via Zoom. Log-in information will be provided on the registration confirmation email.

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
PST

(check website to confirm  
time)

**There is no charge for ASQ  
members or non-members**

**Advance registration is  
required for planning  
purposes and to receive  
RU credit following the  
meeting.**

**Attendance at this meeting  
earns RU credit toward  
ASQ recertification.**

**More information about the  
Phoenix ASQ section is  
available [here](#).**



**Kimberly Watson-Hemphill**  
Firefly Consulting

There is an ever-growing demand for knowledge of AI across multiple industries. Professionals skilled in constructing questions and working with a wide range of data sources are needed now more than ever. AI can help drive cross-functional collaboration and data integration efforts for organizations.

This presentation will explore how generative AI can enhance quality practices through data analysis, visualization, and process improvement support. Current AI adoption trends in the workplace will be discussed as well as practical applications and how AI-based tools compare with traditional software.

A case study will illustrate how AI-assisted analysis helped identify excessive call wait times and measure the impact of process improvements.

The presenter will also review the potential benefits, challenges, and future plans for AI implementation across industries, highlighting both the promises and limitations of modern AI technologies.

*About the speaker:* Kimberly Watson-Hemphill, a globally recognized leader in the field of Innovation and Operational Excellence, founded Firefly Consulting in 2009. She is responsible for the vision, management, and long-term strategy of the company and is committed to driving high-impact, sustainable results for clients. Kimberly is frequently invited to speak on topics related to leadership and continuous improvement both nationally and abroad. She has authored several books and publications, including *Fast Innovation* and *Innovating Lean Six Sigma*. She is a Master Black Belt and a senior member of ASQ.

# January 21, 2026 Temecula ASQ Section January 21, 2026 Virtual Webinar

This is a joint offering from  
Temecula ASQ and the Southern  
California Local Networking  
Group Regulatory Affairs  
Professionals Society (RAPS)

**DATE:**

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

This is a virtual/online (Webex)  
webinar.

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm PST

There is no charge for ASQ  
members or non-members.

No advance registration is  
required – just go to the Webex  
link for the meeting.

**Online Instructions:**

<https://asq.webex.com/asq/j.php?MTID=m22160a4f38a34cb147359d8bee9406f3>

**Webinar number:**  
2557 041 8152

**Webinar password:**  
3dfMuFskQ83 (33368375 when  
dialing from a phone or video  
system)

**Join by phone:**  
1-877-668-4490 Call-in toll-free  
number (US/Canada)  
1-408-792-6300 Call-in toll  
number (US/Canada)

**Access code:** 255 704 18152

**Attendance at this meeting earns  
RU credit toward ASQ  
recertification.**

**For more information about the  
Temecula ASQ section, click  
[here](#).**

**For more information about the  
Southern California Local  
Networking Group RAPS, click  
[here](#).**

## FDA's New Medical Device Quality Management System Regulation: What you Need to Know



**Kim Trautman, M.S.**  
**Medical Device, IVD and Combination Product Expert**

FDA's Quality Management System Regulation (QMSR) comes into full effect in February of 2026. This is FDA's first revision of 21 CFR 820 since 1996. FDA has incorporated ISO 13485:2016 into the regulation by reference and has additional U.S. country-specific requirements. In addition, the Federal Register contained the concurrent amendment to Combination Product GMP requirements in 21 CFR Part 4.

Hear first-hand from the 1996 QS regulation author and ISO 13485 International TC 210 QMS expert about how these changes will affect medical device manufacturers - from the requirements to the comments in the Preamble, to FDA medical device inspections, MDSAP, and more.

- Nuts and Bolts
- By the Numbers
- Increase in FDA's Expectations
- Possible Surprises

Attendees will gain an understanding of the new FDA QMS requirements which are in addition to ISO 13485:2016 and learn some of the nuances and increased emphasis from the regulation's preamble. The presenter will also discuss the value of Gap Analysis and transition planning along with consideration of other regulatory obligations before the QMSR goes into effect.

*About the Speaker: Kimberly A. Trautman is an International Medical Devices, IVD, and Combination Product Expert with over 40 years of experience. She worked at the US Food and Drug Administration for over 24 years and currently works with regulatory agencies around the globe. An expert in global medical device regulations, Kim wrote and harmonized the 1996 US FDA Quality System Regulation. She also served on authoring groups for ISO 13485, the 21 CFR Part 4 Combination Product GMPs, and many of the Combination Product guidance documents. Kim conceived and developed the Medical Device Single Audit Program and its consortium of five Global Regulators which she chaired for the initial four-years of the program. She is a 25-year veteran of the Global Harmonization Task Force, a foundational member of the International Medical Device Regulators Forum, and she established an Authorized MDSAP Auditing Organization and a new Notified Body for EU IVDR/MDR Designation.*

## GET YOUR FREE MONTHLY GIFTS (FOR ASQ MEMBERS)!

Be sure to check out the free ASQ Member Gifts for November! Every month the focus is on a different aspect of quality, and the gifts include a variety of valuable resources.

The December gift (available through December 31) included access to ALL the tools, videos, templates, and insights that were offered in 2025, including webinars, articles, case studies, and podcasts.

You can also earn Recertification Units (RUs) for watching ASQ webinars and videos, reading e-books, etc. Be sure to [access](#) your January free gifts by January 30.

## UPCOMING ASQ CERTIFICATION EXAMS

ASQ Certification has impacted careers for decades with over 400,000 certifications issued worldwide.

Offering independently accredited certifications with a proven track record, you can be confident that your certification will maintain its value throughout your career.

By achieving ASQ Certification, you join a proud legacy of quality professionals and demonstrate your pursuit of excellence through quality. Acquire the knowledge to position yourself and your organization ahead of the competition and get certified by ASQ today!

Applications are now being accepted for ASQ Certification exams that will be offered March 1-31, 2026. The application deadline is February 9 for the following:

- CQT (Quality Technician)
- CQI (Quality Inspector)
- CRE (Reliability Engineer)
- CFSQA (Food Safety and Quality Auditor)
- CMDA (Medical Device Auditor)
- CMQ/OE (Manager of Quality/Organizational Excellence)
- CSSBB (Six Sigma Black Belt)
- CSSYB (Six Sigma Yellow Belt)
- CSQP (Supplier Quality Professional)

You can apply [online](#) or you can download an exam application for mailing or faxing. You will need your resumé and credit card to complete the application.

For more details about ASQ certifications (19 different certifications are offered), click [here](#).

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT JOURNAL - ANOTHER ASQ MEMBER BENEFIT

*The Quality Management Journal* (QMJ) is a peer-reviewed journal published by ASQ. It aims to link the efforts of academic researchers and quality management practitioners by publishing significant research relevant to quality management practice and provide a forum for discussion of such research by academics and practitioners.

While foremost a research journal, QMJ articles - while grounded in research and theory - are written specifically for quality management practitioners. Journal readers represent a variety of industries including manufacturing, service, education, and more.

All ASQ professional, senior, fellow, and honorary members have full access to a digital subscription of QMJ. It is published in January, April, July, and October. Read the newest edition [here](#).

## DOES YOUR MENTAL ENERGY NEED A BOOST?

### Less Stressed Club Virtual Event

**January 5 from 11:30 am to 12:00 noon PST**

The Less Stressed Leaders Club is a community for managers and professionals who want to lead well without running themselves into the ground. It's not another "hustle harder" pep talk. It's about building the habits, rhythms, and mindset that make leadership sustainable.

Can you relate to any of the following?

- Your energy feels drained by noon
- Small issues feel big
- You react more than you strategize
- Your team looks to you for clarity – that you don't have

Join Paul D. Casey (Growing Forward Services) and Garth Reed (ExperienceBetter) on January 5. The 30-minute Zoom session will help you discover small, practical ways to build your mental strength so you can show up with more focus, patience, and purpose.

There is no charge. Register [here](#).

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."

~Martin Luther King Jr.

## ROOT CAUSE = PROBLEM PREVENTION

### Ann Arbor ASQ Virtual Meeting

January 5 from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm PST

When you think in terms of problem solving, the Root Cause step is the most important one. Root Cause Analysis (finding the *true* root cause or causes of a problem) is the cornerstone of solving the problem and preventing future problem occurrences.

Presenter Don Wright will discuss problem solving process models and the origin of the “Five (5) Why” problem solving method. He will share insights about how identifying the true root cause requires working across functions and departments and must be clearly understood, with solutions embraced by all involved to prevent problem recurrence.

There is no charge, but [advance registration](#) is required.

## TAKING PROJECT MANAGEMENT CAREERS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

### PMI-Columbia River Basin Hybrid Meeting

January 6 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm PST

(Virtual Zoom presentation starts at 6:30)

The project management field is pretty crowded these days. It's no longer enough to be just really good at what you do. You have to be more. You have to add value over and above the normal requirements of project managers.

So how do you add value? How do you stand out from others? How do you get recognized in this very crowded field?

Presenter David Barrett will get attendees thinking about what they can do to innovate their careers and get to the next level:

- What is industry looking for in a project manager these days?
- How can an individual stand up and be recognized in a crowded field?
- What do you need to do to ensure career success as a project manager?

This is a hybrid event; [advance registration](#) is required. Cost is \$30 for the in-person meeting (at CG Public House in Kennewick), or \$15 for the virtual option. More information is available [here](#).

## BUSINESS AFTER HOURS – NETWORKING EVENT

January 8 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm PST in Pasco

The Tri-City Regional Chamber offers monthly opportunities to meet and network with other business professionals at existing and new businesses in our area. Each month a different sponsor hosts the event and has the opportunity to showcase their goods and services amid a fun and social atmosphere.

This month's event is being hosted by Goodwill Industries of the Columbia, located at 3521 West Court Street in Pasco.

There will be refreshments and beverages. Bring your business card to enter to win a door prize.

No reservations are required. It's free to attend - bring a friend! More information is available [here](#).

## STREAMLINING AUDIT DOCUMENTATION WITH MICROSOFT COPILOT

### ASQ Audit Division Webinar

January 14 from 9:00 am to 10:00 am PST

This hands-on, live practical session with Tatiana Miranda will explore how Microsoft 365 Copilot transformed her auditing process by enhancing efficiency and accuracy.

Participants will learn practical applications of Copilot in various Microsoft-based auditing tasks, including its use in Excel (checklists) and Word documents (reports), as well as addressing technical questions and support to make audit reports more effective.

#### Key takeaways:

- Increased Efficiency: Learn how Copilot can automate tasks, allowing auditors to focus on more critical aspects of their work.
- Improved Accuracy: Discover how Copilot's intelligent suggestions can enhance data accuracy and the quality of audit reports.
- Enhanced Collaboration: Understand how Copilot facilitates real-time AI collaboration.

There is no charge, but [advance registration](#) is required.



## PROCESS INNOVATION

### Detroit ASQ Virtual Meeting

January 15 from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm PST

Organizations and work are always changing, and keeping up requires constant improvement. While small changes and improvements are easier to implement, they are sometimes not enough.

To move from incremental change to breakthrough or disruptive change, a different approach is needed.

Presenter Jim Nelson will highlight the tools, techniques, and strategies needed to innovate your business processes for a more substantial impact on your company and your customers. You'll learn about innovation and implementation of breakthrough process improvements to help stay ahead of the game.

There is no charge, but [advance registration](#) is required.

## ROI & QUALITY: WHERE IS YOUR DATA FOR BUILDING VALUE?

### On-Demand Video from ETS

As a quality champion, you already understand the power of a flexible, scalable quality management system (QMS). But translating that value into measurable impact across your organization may be challenging.

This insightful on-demand webinar discusses the strategies and tools needed to clearly demonstrate the return on investment (ROI) of your QMS - making the case for quality not just as a function, but as a driver of business success.

Learn how to:

- Build a compelling ROI strategy that resonates with executive stakeholders
- Identify and leverage the most impactful data to showcase the value of a QMS
- Leverage an ROI Calculator to quantify benefits and optimize your quality investments

Access the video [here](#).

## LEANING INTO THE FUTURE: USING PEST ANALYSIS AS A STRATEGIC TOOL

### Philadelphia ASQ Virtual Meeting

January 21 from 9:00 am to 10:00 am PST

To succeed in a rapidly changing environment, leaders must be able to anticipate, not just react. This presentation will introduce Political, Economic, Social, and Technological (PEST) Analysis as a strategic tool used to identify and evaluate PEST forces shaping the external environment.

Participants will learn how to apply this simple yet powerful framework to uncover emerging risks and opportunities, guide decision-making, and align improvement efforts with broader industry trends. Then, after a straightforward explanation of each PEST dimension, the session will dive into a detailed example exploring how this analysis can be applied within the healthcare industry.

Presenter Katie Castree Benyo will share how external pressures such as regulatory shifts, economic uncertainty, labor challenges, and advances in technology can be systematically analyzed and translated into meaningful strategic priorities.

Whether you're an operational Lean Six Sigma practitioner, or a strategic quality leader, this session will equip you with a practical tool to strengthen your organization's readiness for the future. You will get a clear understanding of how to use PEST Analysis to spark productive conversations, connect improvement initiatives to larger trends, and help your teams navigate change with confidence - preparing for what's next, not just what's now.

Key takeaways:

- Understand why it is important to have a strategy for connecting external insights to your internal improvement priorities
- Identify PEST Analysis and its four elements as a tool to bridge strategy and execution in operational environments
- Become familiar with example factors and risks that PEST Analysis can identify

There is no charge, but [advance registration](#) is required.

"Always end the day with a positive thought. No matter how hard things were, tomorrow is a fresh opportunity to make it better."

~ Author Unknown

## VALENTINE'S DINNER

### Fundraiser for Friends of Disabled Veterans

February 14 – Dinner at 6:00 pm PST

Every veteran, no matter what their role in service, comes back differently than when they left. To many, integration as a civilian can be crippling. Being around other veterans is comforting, but they also need to expand those types of bonds to family and friends that their service separated them from (physically and emotionally). Relating to non-veterans can sometimes be challenging. While there are several outdoor recreation type "adventure" organizations for disabled veterans, they don't address the veteran's loved ones as part of the experience(s) and often are restricted only to disabled veterans.

The purpose of Friends of Disabled Veterans is to offer a place where veterans and their families can have a place to go where people appreciate and respect what they've been through. The goal is to help them feel completely accepted and included in a fun, relaxing environment.

One of their projects at this time is the creation of an accessible Ranch for veterans and those closest to them to enjoy together. The Ranch will feature multiple outdoor focused engagement and learning areas designed to accommodate a variety of physical challenges. The Ranch is being built through donations of time, materials, dollars, and individual volunteers, suppliers, and contractors.

Friends of Disabled Veterans is a 501(c3) Non-Profit Organization founded in June of 2016. Located in the Tri-Cities area, they operate on the foundation of six pillars: integrity, empowerment, family, loyalty, involvement, and kindness.

Only 100 tickets will be available for this special, fully catered Valentine's dinner fundraiser by the Pasco Masonic Lodge. The event will be held at the Clearwater Conference Center in Kennewick. Cost is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple. RSVP to Mick at 509-947-9233. For more information about the organization or to make a monetary donation, check their [Facebook](#) page.

Has your email address changed? Keep informed of ASQ events and information by updating your contact information and email preferences at <http://www.asq.org/>. Log in and click "My Account" to update your membership record. You can add or make email, address, and phone changes in the "Contact" tab, and then click on the "email preferences" tab to be sure you are subscribed to receive future Section communications.

## ASQ LEAN AND SIX SIGMA CONFERENCE

February 22-24 in Phoenix

Learn from industry experts how to build a culture of continuous improvement and achieve operational brilliance at the 25th annual Lean and Six Sigma Conference. Celebrating a quarter-century of innovative excellence, this year's event theme is "Leaning into the Future."

Attendees will experience a transformative journey exploring cutting-edge Lean and Six Sigma methodologies, diving into the power of AI and automation to redefine process excellence. With a focus on creating excellence in processes, systems, and the workplace, the conference will provide the tools and insights to drive breakthrough results.

Keynote Speakers include Dan Chuparkoff and Andrea Baker.

Cost is \$1175 for ASQ members or \$1449 for non-members. Additional information is available [here](#).

## 2026 LEAN SUMMIT – FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

### Association for Manufacturing Excellence (AME)

February 25 & 26 in Portland

This mini conference is designed for Continuous Improvement professionals who want to explore innovative Lean practices, learn from real-world case studies, and build new skills.

#### Keynote topics:

- "The Future of Continuous Improvement is Human: Unlocking Human Potential for Sustainable Performance"
- "Leading Large-Scale Lean Transformation: Operationalizing Leadership's Role in Driving Change at Scale"

#### Workshops:

- "Go with the Flow: Maximizing our Ability to Navigate Change by Learning what it means to be Present"
- "Standard Work at the Speed of Change. Harnessing Technology to Build a Stronger Foundation"
- "Learn to Bend, not Break: Strengthening Leadership Hardiness"

There will also be benchmarking tours and practitioner sessions.

The cost is \$495 for AME members or \$645 for non-members. Learn more about the Summit, view the [session descriptions](#), and register [here](#).

## TRI-CITIES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIPS

### Applications due March 9

The Tri-Cities Diversity and Inclusion Council (TCD&IC) celebrates diversity through education. Scholarships play a crucial role in narrowing the equity gap.

This year the Council will be awarding four scholarships of \$2000 or more – three to high school students and one to a college/certification level student.

Applicants must be enrolled in high school, college or a trade school and have a GPA of 2.0 or higher. Preference is given to applicants from the Tri Cities and surrounding areas.

More information and the application form is available [here](#).

## 2026 WORLD CONFERENCE ON QUALITY & IMPROVEMENT

### May 17-20 in Orlando, Florida

Join with other quality professionals to celebrate ASQ's 80th anniversary!

The conference will be held at the [Marriott World Center](#), named as the best hotel in Orlando and near Walt Disney World. This year's theme is "When Purpose and Quality Meet, Magic Happens."

Registration provides live, in-person access to:

- Concurrent education sessions
- Workshops
- Three general sessions and two Keynotes
- ASQ's Annual Meeting
- Two networking receptions and two lunches
- Dedicated networking and product discovery in the exhibit hall
- Online access to concurrent session recordings for 90 days after the conference
- 2.5 RUs

Take advantage of the [early bird registration discount](#) – \$1249 for ASQ members and \$1449 for non-members - only available through January 31.

## SOME FUN CHUCKLES...

**Starting  
pay is \$11.59 but  
after 6 months  
it goes up to  
\$18.40, when do  
you want to start?**

**In 6 months.**

