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Moral Dilemma

You may have at some stage been faced with the following situation as Quality Manager. For example, you may have discovered a particular component in your engine fuel management has the potential to cause an engine run away. These engine fuel management systems are used in buses, lorries and other heavy-duty vehicles. Whilst there has been no occurrences of engine runaways as yet, you are unhappy with the controls on the manufacturing process as they are not mistake proof and process quality control records indicate problems holding specification. No one else is aware of this potential problem. Also you may have experienced some other major, unrelated, quality issues that have resulted in rather heated discussions with your Chief Executive Officer. This could be the last straw. Another example could be that, your organisation after an extensive research programme has finally obtained Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for their world beating infusion pump used to deliver precise amounts of drug to the patient. You have recently discovered a potential problem in the software, which has the potential to incorrectly deliver the wrong dosage. The product is the centrepiece of the organisation's very expensive advertising campaign. Changing the software will require re-certification by the FDA and very expensive delays. What would be your reaction to these circumstances? Would you:

- Discuss with a colleague? - *Put it in the public domain*
- Discuss with the CEO? - *He has been known to shoot the messenger*

- Request a risk assessment on the design and process? - *So someone else can discover the problem*
- Look in the situations vacant? - *In Quality World or QM&T website*
- Say or do nothing? - *The catastrophe probably will not happen*

Both scenarios are based on real circumstances. There is another approach. In the medical and aerospace industry it is now a recognised practice to have an anonymous reporting method of incidents or accidents. The so-called 'grass or snitch line'. See Medical Devices, Food and Drug Administration and Aviation Authority websites. But best of all, avoid the situation in the first place - preventive action. ISO9001 does give some guidance but it has been criticised for being a little confusing, however, it does clearly explain the difference between corrective and preventive action. Possibly risk assessment - Failure Mode Effects Analysis (FMEA) or Fault Tree Analysis may help. Alternatively, Mistake Proofing or Poka Yoke may have some answers - visit <http://www.poka-yoke.org.uk>. If you have any thoughts about risk assessment or would like to discuss further the issues outlined in this article then please contact Geoff Vorley by e-mail geoff@qmt.co.uk

Microsoft in Trouble Again

According to a recent report, more than 90% of PC users use Microsoft software. However, Microsoft has recently admitted that there is a "critical" flaw in its latest versions of Windows operating system which could allow unauthorised access to computers. Windows versions NT, 2000, XP and Server 2003 are all

affected. Windows' users have been asked to download a free patch from Microsoft's website which is a software repairing patch and is said to cure the problem.

This problem was compounded with the news that Microsoft is also investigating how part of its Windows operating system source code leaked onto the net. It is extremely valuable because it is similar to the blueprint to any system or design, and is a tightly-guarded secret. Access to the code could give Microsoft's competitors a better understanding of how Microsoft's technology works.

Microsoft said it did not yet know the source of leak, or how many people have access to it on the net. For more information please see BBC news.

ISO 9001:2000 Guidelines for the Education Sector

ISO has recently published a new guideline for organisations in the education sector, at all levels including, elementary, medium and higher. ISO/IWA 2: *Quality management systems - Guidelines for the application of ISO 9001:2000 in education* contains the full text of ISO 9001:2000, and IWA 2 includes the full text of ISO 9004:2000. The IWA 2 guidelines do not add to, change or modify the requirements of ISO 9001:2000. Compared to the usual ISO process of developing International Standards through its technical committee structure, IWA's are developed in open workshops and organized by a national standards institute. The guideline is available from ISO national member institutes and from ISO Central Secretariat. For more information please visit www.iso.org

New Standards for Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are designed to prevent death, injury and damage. With the introduction of a new International Standard ISO 12239:2003, *Fire detection and fire alarm systems - Smoke alarms*, it will harmonise the various standards used for smoke alarms around the world, providing manufacturers with a common set of requirements, test methods, performance criteria allowing them to manufacture to a single standard. One of the main difficulties manufacturers have had to overcome has been the varying signals as well as the different labelling, connection and battery requirements for smoke alarms used in different countries. The same signal would be used in smoke

alarms for houses, commercial buildings, factories, shopping centres, so that individuals, no matter where they hear the signal they would know it is a fire alarm and they should immediately evacuate the premises. The new standard is the work of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 21, *Equipment for fire protection and fire fighting*, subcommittee SC 3, *Fire detection and alarm systems* and is available from ISO national member institutes and from ISO Central Secretariat. For more information please visit www.iso.org

Safety Requirements for Utility Lighters

A new ISO International Standard, defining safety requirements for utility lighters, should reduce the number of fires and burn injuries caused by these devices. Utility lighters can cause extreme dangers such as excessive flame heights, spitting or leak gas, etc. ISO 22702:2003, *Utility lighters - General consumer-safety requirements*, provides safety specifications for these utility lighters. It also includes requirements on the refilling of utility lighters, product marking, instructions and warnings, test methods as well as functional and structural integrity requirements. The new standard is the work of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, working group WG 1, *Cigarette lighters*, and is available from ISO national member institutes and from ISO Central Secretariat. For more information please visit www.iso.org.

Mobile Phone Censorship

According to a recent report, the mobile operators in the UK have joined forces to protect children from adult material which can be accessed by mobile phones. Orange, O2, T-Mobile, Vodafone, Virgin and 3 have all signed up to a Code of Practice, which imposes an "18" classification on adult material. It covers images, video, gambling, games, chatrooms and net access but does not cover premium rate voice and SMS services. They will still be regulated by the ICSTIS (Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services) Code of Practice. With the newer mobile phones that have colour screens, video and mobile surfing, there has been a growing concern about how much inappropriate material children have access to very easily. Chatroom access through mobiles have been a particular concern, as they are popular with

many children and teenagers. The code will ban those under 18 from mobile chatrooms which are not moderated. Mobile chatrooms - or Wap chatrooms - are similar to net chatrooms, but involve groups of people sending messages which all those in the same room can read on their phone screens. For more information please visit BBC news

Mydoom Virus

It has been reported that the latest virus outbreak was caused by the malicious worm, called Mydoom or Novarg. The virus can be transmitted as an e-mail attachment and if opened, it can send itself out to other e-mail addresses, infecting other computers. Many of the e-mails infected with this virus look as if they have been sent from educational institutions or charities, to fool recipients into opening it. The best way to safeguard yourself against any virus is to install an anti-virus program, and keep it up dated, making sure you get the latest patches and updates for your operating system, and never automatically open e-mail attachments. Always download or purchase software from trusted, reputable sources and always take regular backup of your files. For further information please see BBC news.

Improving Emergency Services

As reported recently, the London Ambulance Service has become the first in the UK to use new technology to locate accurately mobile phone callers so as to respond to 999 calls much more quickly. The London Ambulance Service receives approximately 750 calls from mobile phones each day. However, the majority of callers are not familiar with the area they are calling from and are unable to be precise as to where help is needed. This is a major step forward in helping the emergency services to respond to calls from mobile users as quickly as possible. Ofcom, which regulates the phone industry, has welcomed the move. The technology was developed by Ofcom in association with the UK's mobile phone operators, BT and Cable and Wireless. For more information please see BBC news.

Mobile Phones Providing Evidence For Crime

According to a recent report, nowadays, the evidence from mobile phones are almost as

useful to the police as fingerprints or DNA. The technology can be used to prove where an individual was at a key moment. In the past five years, dozens of murderers have been convicted partly as a result of evidence about their mobile phones or those of their victims. Detectives now routinely contact mobile phone networks to obtain details of phone calls made by either the victim or the suspect. For more information please see BBC news.

Cyber-Crime

It has been reported that the Home Office has recently announced a new team of specialist investigators that will take on the challenge of dealing with cyber-crime. The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) will gather expertise from the police forces. To take this further, there has been talks on producing guidelines to help protect small firms from the growing threat of online crime. Parliamentary lobby group Eurim and the Institute for Public Policy Research hope their "*Protecting the Vulnerable*" report will improve security awareness among SMEs. Many SMEs have insufficient computing expertise or either lack the time or funds to combat the threat. Many of these companies provide services within the supply chains of larger organisations. The lack of effective secure computing within these SMEs creates a risk not only to these firms themselves but also to their larger organisation partners. Specific recommendations advocated by Eurim include establishing a secure computing information resource maintained by the National Hi-Tech Crime Unit (NHTCU), a 'Green Cross Code' pack detailing codes of practice for the safe use of technology, the inclusion of practical security modules in IT training courses and a Home Office advertising campaign highlighting the need for PC security. For more information please visit www.theregister.co.uk

BCS Launches New Qualification for Project Managers

The British Computer Society (BCS) has recently launched a new qualification for IT professionals wishing to progress within the field of project management. This is the first IT related Foundation Certificate in Project Management. The course is suitable for anyone involved in IT projects or new to project management wishing to gain the fundamentals of the subject. The course

QM&T March 2004 Newsletter

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includes, project planning; monitoring and control; change control and configuration management; effort estimation; quality and risk management and communication between stakeholders. Further information please visit www.bcs.org.uk