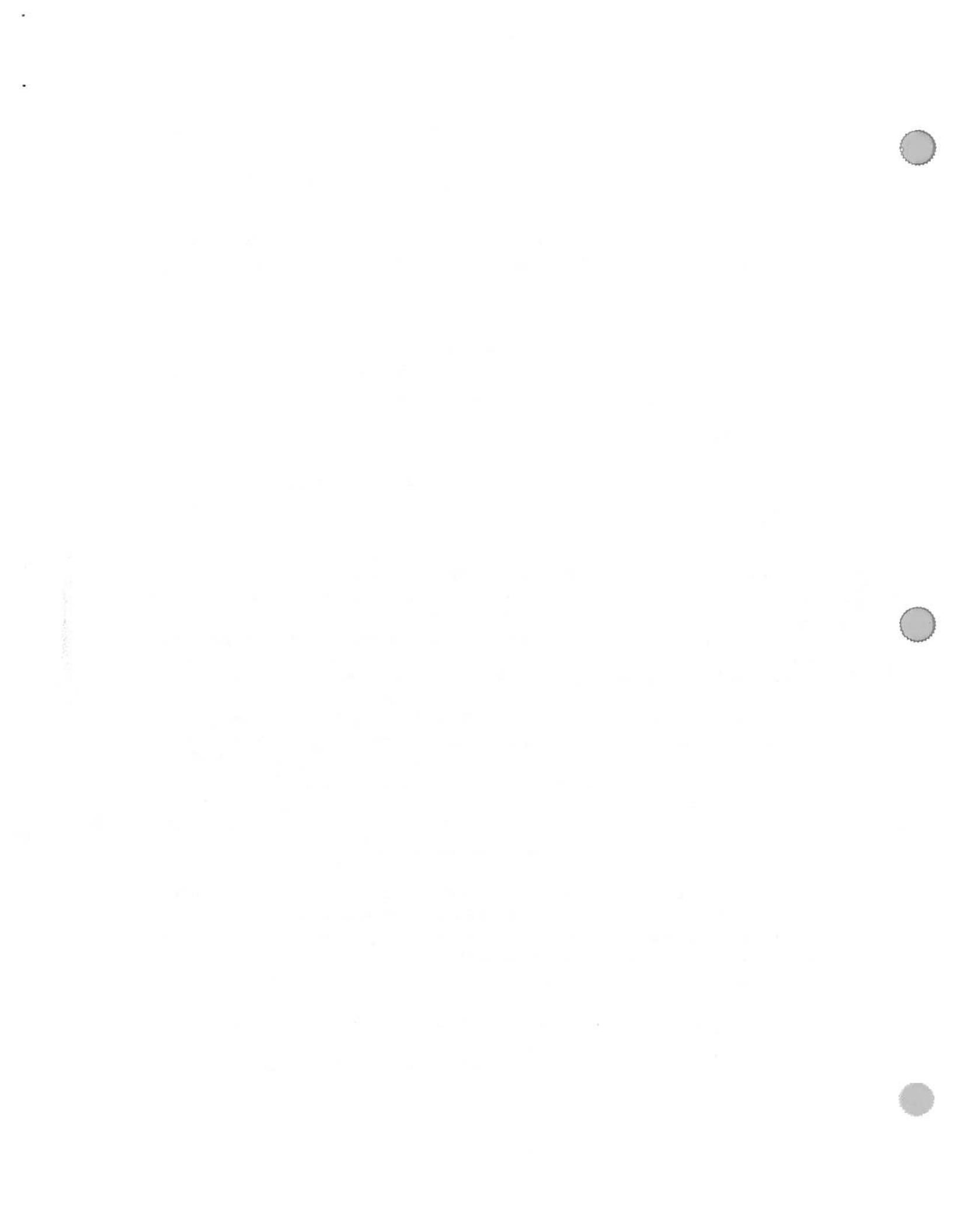




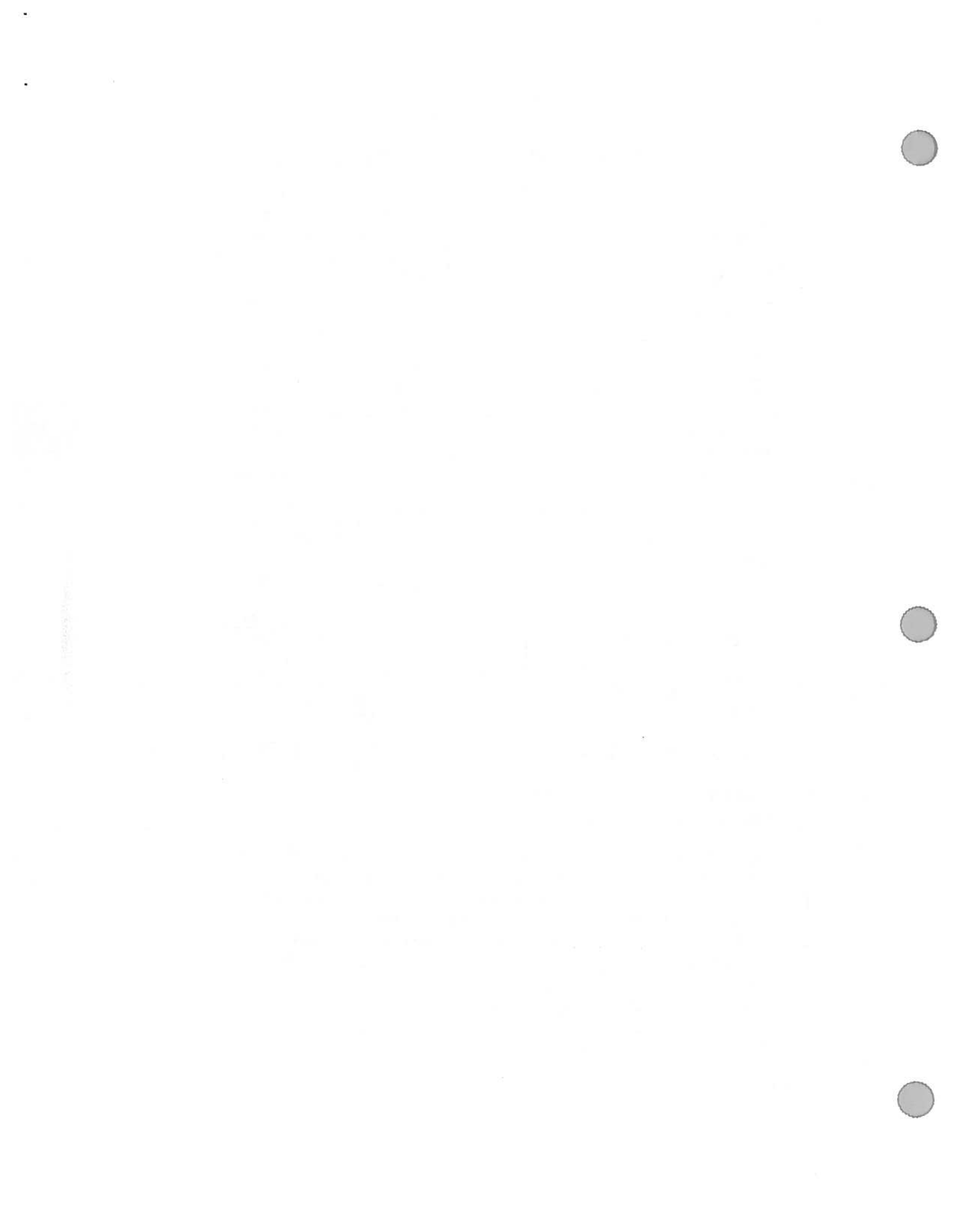
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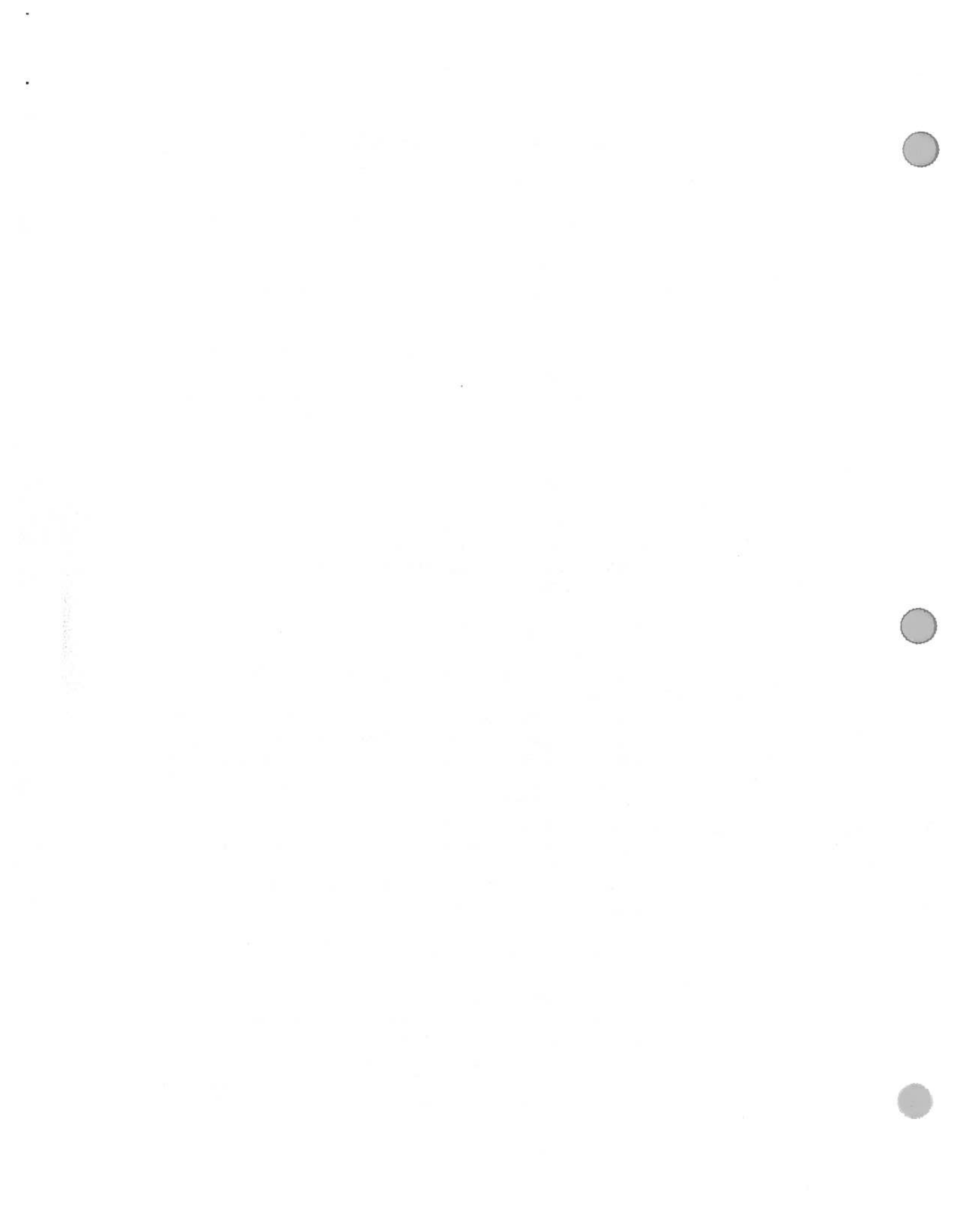




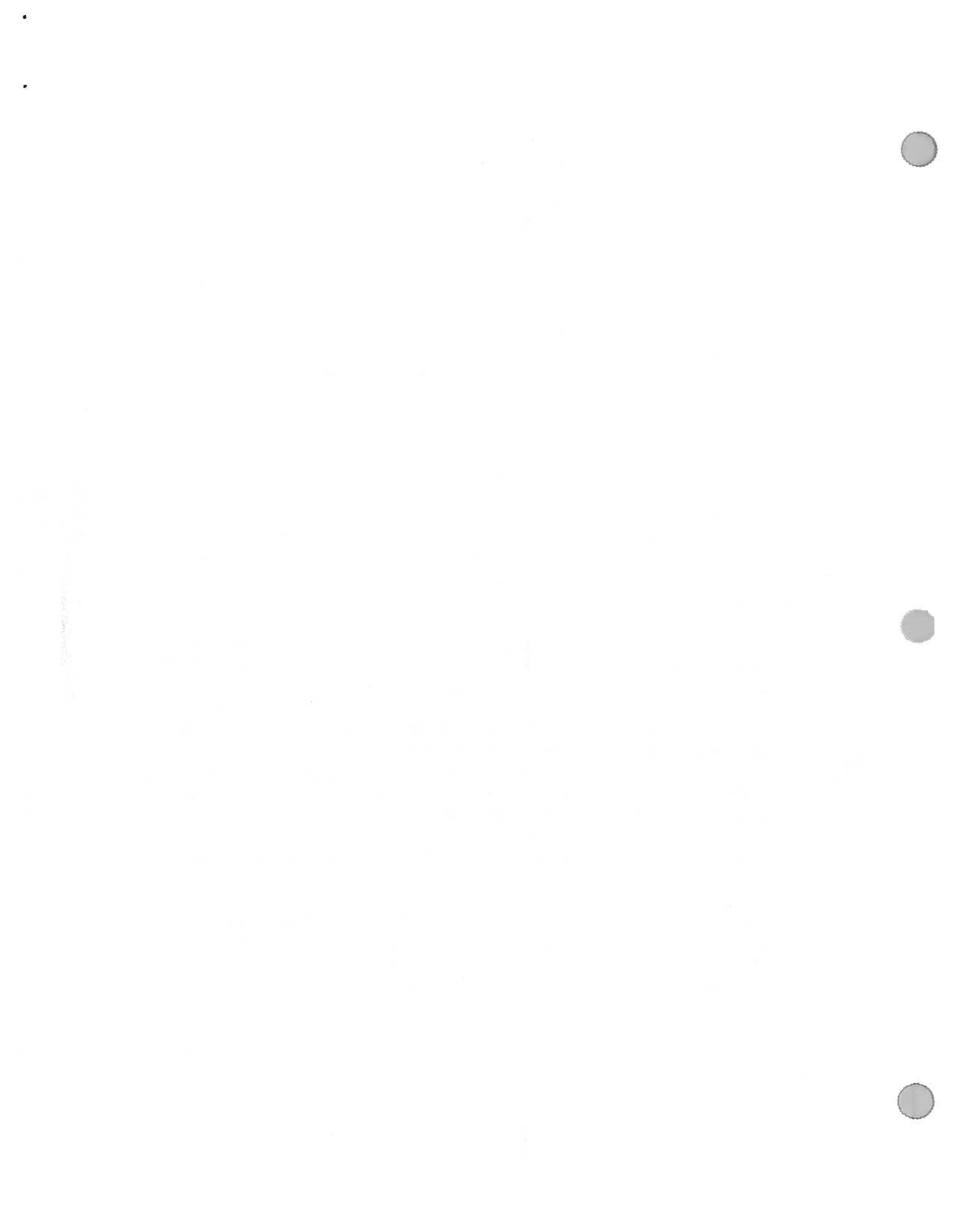














commissioner for the FDA because of the more pressing issues facing him. And then it will take time for the Senate to approve the President elect's appointment. During this time, an acting commissioner of the FDA will just try to hold the agency together at the current unacceptable low level of performance.

I am going to go out on a limb and side with the people who say the job that the FDA is tasked to do is too big for one agency. There is a proposal to split the agency into two, one covering food and the other covering medicine and devices.

FDA insiders have reported that food safety has been short changed for years. With so much food now coming from outside the United States, I think that there has to be a renewed focus on food. And yes, I think this means setting up FDA inspection programs in foreign countries. The goal should be to first stop the importation of tainted foods and second to assist the country in setting up their own internal food safety agency. And any country that will not work with this program should be banded from importing food into the United States.

For the new agency that oversees drugs and devices, it needs to be back to science based decisions. Industry is making breakthroughs in new technologies (genetics, nanotechnology, bioengineering, etc.) and the agency has no expertise with them. It needs to set up ways for academia and industry to advise the agency on these topics until it has its own expertise.

Basically the mission set for the FDA all those years ago in Theodore Roosevelt's time, protect the public safety, is still sound. It is the way the agency goes about to achieve this that no longer works in this rapidly evolving environment. So if I could advise the President elect and congress, I would tell them it is time for massive change at the FDA and the agency can not make the need changes on its own. And to the American public, I would apologize and admit this new "FDA" is going to cost more, but the current state of the agency is killing Americans.

Quality Topic

Knowledge Management as a Competitive Advantage

Radical Thinking? By Akhilesh Gulati

Knowledge management (KM) is defined as a range of practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. KM is generally accepted as a vital component of an organization's competitiveness and its associated culture. So why is managing a body of knowledge that impacts a company's culture so important? Hopefully, this is a rhetorical question.

Many organizations initiating Lean Six Sigma (LSS) typically have projects covering a diverse range of functions and multiple processes. Since many of the different project teams may never interact with each other, the potential overlap of activities may result in wasted resources.

This scenario is more prevalent than we would like to think. Projects are completed, changes are made, new procedures created, without some of the 'necessary' stakeholders being in the loop. This creates 'a disconnect' among differing groups, preventing new insights and practices from spreading across functional or hierarchical lines. By organizations ignoring KM many costly mistakes continue to be made. The term 'ignore' is rather strong but implies what the expected result ends up being – ignorance.

In the past, project presentations may have been made to executives and completion reports filed. Electronic media may even have been set up as a repository for better knowledge exchanges. However, this is often simply a storage for 'lessons-learned' and 'project presentations' rather than leveraged as practices that help identify issues, create solutions, represent current thinking, distribute knowledge and, more importantly, enable adoption of insights and experiences.

In order to sustain improvements achieved through any project (especially LSS or improvement type projects) and remain competitive, organizations need to understand the structure of knowledge management and couple it within their strategic decision making processes. This would help elevate knowledge management from mere information sharing to knowledge that can actually solve real problems. We often tend to use the terms data, information and knowledge interchangeably, but Tobin (1998) in "The Knowledge-Enabled Organization" states that knowledge evolves from information, which in turn is developed from data. His definition follow:

- Data with relevance and purpose, becomes information, e.g., when we increased input current above 40 micro-ohms, we started getting defective product
- Information then evolves into knowledge when it is actually applied to the job, e.g., we can produce consistently good product if we can maintain the input current between 30-40 micro-ohms. This itself could help improve reliability and a provide competitive advantage.
- Knowledge, when combined with intuition, becomes wisdom, e.g., controlling the input current can help improve product consistency. Combining the understanding of how this occurs, and where else this principle might have an impact, increases the ability to apply this knowledge elsewhere, thereby reaping additional benefits throughout the organization.

Understanding the hierarchy of data to information to knowledge and associated wisdom will make it easier for organizations to incorporate KM into their strategic planning and subsequent decision making processes. Unfortunately, many times, strategic planning is merely an annual event. As organizations begin to understand the link between the 'tons' of data that is available and the 'wisdom' that might be lying dormant, they can also start appreciating the need to build KM into their strategic planning process. Since LSS methodologies create an environment for change, those organizations embracing this initiative

can easily leverage KM to not only improve their strategic planning process, but view it as an integral part of their long-term competitive strategy.

Without a clear KM strategy, organizations risk losing ongoing gains in process optimization as well benefits that could arise by implementation in other areas. It could also mean the difference between winning or losing a bid. Knowledge management rewards knowledge sharing rather than retention, building organizational wisdom rather than a repository of data, and mobilizing resources to proactively anticipate or quickly respond to customer needs – a definite competitive advantage.

What is your Knowledge Management strategy?

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Networking for Quality Professionals

Have you visited any of the other ASQ sections' websites? The local sections share many of their resources, etc. So if you see anything you are interested in, tell one of your board members. They will inquire to see if we can bring it to section 702.

ASQ Orange Section www.asqorangeempire.org

ASQ Los Angeles Section www.asqla.org

ASQ Inland Empire Section www.asq711.org

ASQ Temecula Valley Section www.asqtemecula.org

ASQ San Fernando Valley Section www.asqsfv.org

Educational and Professional Developments

Regional Brief

Region 7 – Holly Duckworth

ASQ is a professional society with over 100,000 individual and organizational members. We are also a member-led organization, with over 1,700 member leaders. For each position on the leadership team for your section, elections are held each year. Nominations for these positions can begin very early in the calendar year as ASQ's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. If you've never considered running for a section leadership position, you may want to check it out. Some positions require minimal involvement, others require significant time and support. Some positions are easy to learn, others are more complicated. In all cases, your professional skills will enhance the member leader role, as well as the volunteer leadership enhancing your professional skills!

There are also several perquisites for being on the leadership team. Each year, a Leadership Training Conference is held for those on the section executive committee. This coming year our conference will be in Palm Springs, California on April 18, 2009. The section can sponsor your attendance at this event. There are also deep discounts for member leaders at the ASQ World Conference, including free pre-conference training and networking sessions. Member leaders are often called upon to volunteer help at divisional conferences often offering the benefit of free attendance for helpers. So there are many Society benefits to becoming a member leader, beyond the sharpening of your own leadership skills.

Would you please consider raising your hand this year to try a member leader role? Start with an easy role. You'll soon experience the pride in leading this prominent professional society.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter.

To all 702 MEMBERS, tells us what you liked and didn't like about this newsletter. The goal is to make a newsletter that has value to YOU.

Send your feedback or material for inclusion in the newsletter to:

chair@asq702.org