

# Linda Paralez, MBA, Ph.D.

## **President and CEO, Demarche Consulting Group, Inc.**

Dr. Paralez has built Demarche Consulting Group into a management consulting firm that specializes in helping clients resolve management challenges by bringing state-of-the-art skills, tools, and strategies to their challenges. Her executive experience spans several decades. Some of the more notable accomplishments Linda has achieved as an executive leader are reflected in the following projects, challenges, and ventures.

## **Select Expertise**

### **Challenger Solid Rocket Booster Redesign**

After the Space Shuttle Challenger accident in 1986, Dr. Paralez joined the Morton Thiokol Team in Brigham City, Utah, and for the next 10 years worked on a series of project and program management efforts related to, first the redesign effort, followed by ongoing manufacturing total quality management process improvements, including documentation and training. During this time, Linda worked under the tutelage of renowned thought leaders in the field of quality management and systems design, including Dr. W. Edwards Deming, Dr. Joseph Juran, Eli Goldratt (Theory of Constraints), William Shewart (Statistical Process Control), Don Wheeler (Understanding Variation), Peter Scholtes (Problem Solving), and others. Changes made in operations and manufacturing processes for the solid rocket booster included a shift to work center process, implementation of statistical process monitoring and reporting, elimination of individual performance forms, creation of more effective teaming structures and reports, and significant improvement in quality, throughput, and safety metrics. Linda was given numerous awards for leading problem-solving teams, such as the "Aft Exit Cone Ply-Lift Investigation and Recommendation Team," comprised of leading scientists from multiple agencies. These high-profile teams would be selected in response to observed problems or anomalies, then be convened, chartered, and facilitated according to a designed problem-solving (TQM 7-step) process.

### **City of Seattle Comprehensive Redesign of Department of Construction and Land Use**

Under Linda's executive leadership, her consultant team performed a five-year strategic planning and redesign initiative to completely revamp the permitting process. Under her guidance and facilitation, an organizational and cultural shift occurred, from process focus to customer and outcome focus. By improving the cycle time for construction permitting service delivery, improving customer satisfaction, expanding capacity, enhancing technology use, and streamlining operations to better manage the mandates of the regulatory role of the department, the Department of Construction and Land Use is providing a greater value – and saving precious taxpayer dollars, improving developer success, and building quality assurance into processes. Linda has returned to the agency over the years to assist with design and implementation of quality management systems for plan review and inspection, developing a performance audit system, operational definitions for quality, and means and metrics for data collection and reporting.

### **Snohomish County Planning and Development Redesign**

Linda vetted and organized a team of consultants to design and lead a multi-year organizational development, process improvement, and change management project with Snohomish County to improve their Planning and Development Services. This multi-year project was comprehensive in nature, involving customer and citizen outreach, process analysis and redesign, competency assessment and staff and leadership development, facility redesign, and technology enhancement. The final implementation plan for improving other processes in the Administration includes an ongoing tactical operations plan that supports change and performance monitoring. Because of Linda's leadership and guidance, Snohomish County continues to apply the techniques she recommended, resulting not only in an improved organization, but also an organization able to best serve the citizens for which they work.

### **Western Regional Water Utilities Benchmarking Group**

In the early 1990s, public water utilities were introduced to the concept of making improvements to operational processes through benchmarking. Dr. Paralez, in collaboration with Irvine Ranch Water District and Seattle Public Utilities, created a consortium of 13 primarily West Coast water utilities interested in participating in a series of benchmarking studies to be designed and facilitated by Linda. Initially, the scope of the work was developed by consortium representatives to focus on maintenance practices in the water distribution system only. Responses would be coded so that the findings could be managed by each member as he or she saw fit. Over the next nine years, we designed data collection surveys, held workshops to train members how to respond to surveys and collect data, and held subsequent workshops to review findings and capture learning. Dr. Paralez and her firm were responsible for all data management, analysis, report writing, publication, coordination, and facilitation of this consortium group. Along the way, other members occasionally joined, however the initial core remained stable. Eventually, the consortium negotiated with the American Water Works Association to design and conduct a metrics-oriented benchmark survey of a broader group of water organizations as a transition and replacement of the WRWUBG. Dr. Paralez served on the AWWA team to create that survey instrument.

### **Past Advisory Board Positions**

Governor's Ferry Advisory Council, Kingston, WA

Kitsap County Planning Commission Member and Chair, 8 years

Board of Directors, West Sound Technology Association, Washington

Board of Directors, American Association of Design Drafters

Advisor, Utah Shaken Baby Syndrome, research specialist

Advisor, Utah Child Abuse Prevention Council

Advisor, Ocean Research and Education Society, Grant Writer

Advisor and Board of Director, REI, Poulsbo, WA, transition management and Director training

Advisor, American Water Works Association, Benchmarking Committee, Design team

### **Education**

Ph.D. in Business, emphasis in Technology Management

MBA, minor in Economics

AS and BS studies in Engineering