



Six Sigma for Small Business

Why Six Sigma?

Numerous articles have been written about the success that Motorola, General Electric, and other large corporations have experienced improving processes, identifying waste, and savings millions of dollars utilizing a Six Sigma approach. However, the same can't be said of small and medium-sized organizations. The reality of this situation is that smaller businesses have been led to believe that the Six Sigma process is complicated, expensive, and requires a large budget.

Myth #1

We need to spend upwards of \$15K+ per employee for Black Belt Training in order to implement a Six Sigma System.

Solution: What is needed is a repeatable process that allows the organization to identify, analyze, measure, and improve its core processes. This can be accomplished with simplified tools and methods that focus on customer information, process capabilities, costs of poor quality, and organizational goals and objectives.

Benefits for Smaller Companies

Small to medium-sized companies that have successfully implemented Six Sigma generally are more favorable to new business process thinking and have fewer entrenched systems than larger corporate entities. In addition, smaller businesses are susceptible to ever-changing priorities, and Six Sigma makes it easier for the business to align performance improvement projects with core business objectives and strategies. The Six Sigma process model represents a major opportunity for cost savings. Smaller businesses historically maintain error rates in the 25-35% range and opportunities for improvement can be achieved faster and affect the health of the business positively.

Myth #2

We don't have enough time or resources to undertake a Six Sigma improvement approach.

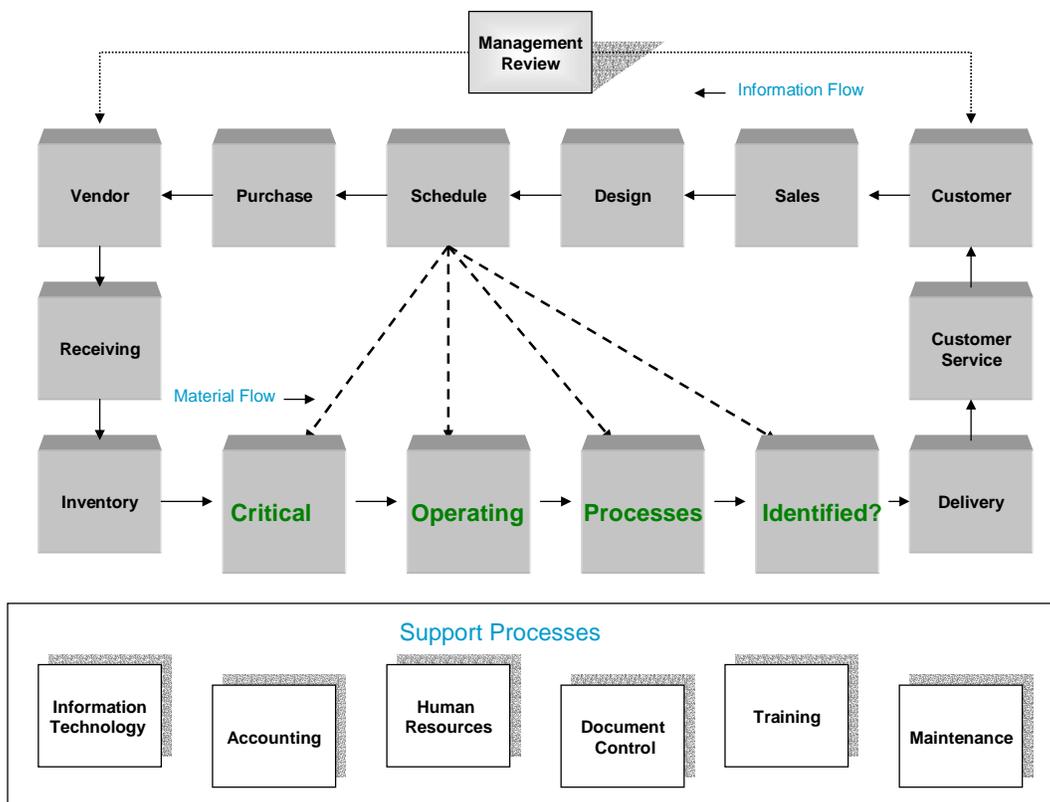
Solution: How much time and dollars is your organization currently using to firefight, band-aid, rework, and fix process and product problems? How many customers are leaving or will leave because your processes are not controlled and predictable? Applying a structured process improvement/process design methodology will identify and eliminate the root causes of your system problems. Furthermore, once your organization has a repeatable process that can be used again and again for business improvement your operating costs will decrease, and your customer base and related satisfaction will increase dramatically.

The Process of Process Improvement

The approach you and your organization takes is dependent on the depth and breadth of your improvement scope. Examples of questions that may need to be answered include:

1. Improvement goals defined and are they achievable and measurable?
2. Do we know what our core/critical processes are that deliver value to our customers and provide us the returns we need? These key business processes are not support processes such as human resources, or budgeting. Most organizations have somewhere between five to eight core customer/mission essential processes such as order fulfillment, product design and development.
3. Do we have the necessary information and data relating to voice collection of our customers, our business, and our processes?
4. Have we mapped our key business processes and identified key measures that will be used for identifying needs, process input and output requirements, current importance and satisfaction levels, including identifying critical process gaps?

Value Stream Mapping





It is important to understand that the scope of the project will determine what steps are necessary for success. These steps may seem straight-forward, but they require effort. Elements for success include:

- Involvement from management
- Clear definitions of customer requirements
- Honest and relevant current performance measurement data
- Shared understanding and cross-functional teamwork of business processes
- A disciplined approach from all involved
- Rewarding and recognizing performers
- Institutionalizing the approach for maximum results now and in the future.

Myth #3

Six Sigma is just another program that requires us to train all our people and spend lots of money learning new tools and techniques, here we go again!

Solution: Six Sigma process improvement tools and techniques are not altogether new; much is built on quality methods that have been around for decades and you probably have used. The define-measure-analyze-improve-control process of Six Sigma has proven itself. Smaller businesses can take advantage of just-in-time practices when applying this methodology. It also reinforces management's understanding of systems thinking in regards to identifying which core processes are instrumental for achieving strategic success, what improvements are necessary, how effective are the measurement systems, and to what extent are our business policies inhibiting us from business excellence?

[Implementing Six Sigma with Sustaining Edge Solutions Inc.](#)

We possess a proven methodology that produces real results. We understand that a time efficient, easy-to-use methodology is what you, and your employees want. The foundation of our process is based on the belief that what is understood gets repeated. We utilize process templates that make sense, and leave you with a system that can be repeated for future improvements on your own.

Please visit our website at www.sustainingedge.com for further information regarding our Six Sigma Methodology Roadmap. Contact us with any questions you may have about this roadmap, your requirements, or further information on the benefits of how we can improve your business performance!

Contact us Today!
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