

# Afterword

## A DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY

A Six Sigma journey is like many other journeys. We need to:

- a. decide where we are going (Six Sigma or bust!)
- b. understand where we are coming from
- c. plan our route
- d. follow the plan
- e. monitor the progress
- f. change plans to meet the unexpected challenges.

In the initial chapters of Six Sigma Deployment, I've tried to provide a sound case for embarking on your Six Sigma journey. I've also provided some detail on the plans necessary to get there, who should be involved, and how the progress may be monitored.

---

Since companies begin their journey from a variety of conceivable starting points, your route may look a bit different from others who have taken the journey. Don't despair! Use the four critical elements of successful programs found in Chapter 3 as your guide, and build a program that works within your organizational structure and effectively taps your resources. You'll get the most from a Six Sigma program once you're able to make it your own.

### **A DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULE**

In general, the deployment plan will follow this schedule:

1. **Management Commitment**—Week Zero.
2. **Management Training**—Week One
3. **Six Sigma Discovery**—Weeks Two to Four.
4. **Champion Training, including Project Selection**—Week Five.
5. **Black Belt Training**—Weeks Six to Eighteen.
6. **Green Belt Training**—Week Nineteen.

Realistically, you'll need some lag time between these activities to accommodate schedules, so that the five months indicated above becomes seven or eight

---

months in a fairly aggressive deployment. Six Sigma Discovery, discussed in Chapter Three's Management Support and Participation section, is the most time-variant of the activities, ranging from several weeks to six months or more depending on the current practices of the organization and its size.

The schedule shown above streamlines the Discovery process to expedite the training. This approach has some popularity so that projects are quickly completed and their savings realized. The streamlined Discovery emphasizes only:

- selection of personnel (Champions, Black Belts, Green Belts),
- defining initial project rating criteria and potential projects, and
- communicating program goals and strategy throughout the organization

Initial projects can be based on internal feedback (bottom up projects), or well-known customer issues, and prioritized by local Champions using a simple metric like the Pareto Priority Index (see Chapter 5). There is usually an abundance of potential projects at this stage.

---

If this schedule is possible in your organization, Black Belts can have their first projects (and some savings) on the books very quickly. This immediate pay-back is great incentive for management commitment to invest in the remaining aspects of Discovery. You'll need the infrastructure and feedback that the Discovery process provides to make the program a longer-term success.

### **BUILDING MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT**

Perhaps the toughest part of deploying Six Sigma is building top management interest and commitment. As discussed throughout this book, a successful Six Sigma deployment requires this top management leadership. If you're in top management, and you're reading this book, I hope you have a good understanding of that by now. If you're not in top management, but have access to company leaders, you need to educate yourself as a Champion of Six Sigma, then make these leaders aware of Six Sigma's potential in your organization.

In larger corporations, it's not uncommon to see pilot programs take root. I've been involved in some very successful pilot programs, usually in specific business units run by motivated, inspired leaders. They may have

---

heard of Six Sigma, or someone on their staff became aware of Six Sigma, and so they came to us seeking guidance in deployment. Since business units often have a fair amount of autonomy, they can be quite successful, especially initially, in this limited deployment. They have the funds, they have the authority to resource staff across the business unit, and they have a direct responsibility to their stakeholders. Eventually, they will need to get Corporate involved, since some projects will extend beyond their business unit, and Corporate will need to buy-in to these solutions. Once the pilot program shows success, business unit leaders won't have much trouble convincing Corporate to get on board.

In smaller companies of 500 or fewer employees, a respected Champion will usually have no problem getting access to top management. Of course this is just the first hurdle.

While top management may be quite accepting of the need for change, they may be uncertain how Six Sigma differs from other programs they have undertaken with limited success and (perhaps) significant cost. You'll need to sell them on Six Sigma, and let them know how it will improve their business *and* reduce their costs.

---

## *Six Sigma Deployment*

---

It is sometimes easier when that message comes from outside the organization. In this case, I suggest a one-day Executive Overview of Six Sigma. If top executives need to wet their whistle with a little self-study, I'd suggest starting with this book, or even a few good articles. There are a variety of articles available on the Internet, including <http://www.qualityamerica.com/> and Tom Pyzdek's monthly *Quality Digest* article (<http://www.qualitydigest.com/>).

Once you've created interest, you'll want to build upon it rapidly. Training a group of high-profile Champions is a great way to bring exposure to the program. This first wave of Champions will develop and sponsor the Wave 1 Black Belt training projects. For this first wave of Champions, find managers that are excited about the benefits of Six Sigma, are well respected, and have good visibility across the organization. Their involvement builds credibility, and their success attracts others for subsequent waves.

While a pilot program or any other limited-scope deployment may be useful to convince others of the merits of Six Sigma, it will provide limited benefits in the long-term. The goal should always be to turn the program over to management for their leadership. One way

---

to increase interest is to continuously seek management input on project selection and approval. Use managers' input to score and prioritize projects, and seek projects that will deliver on the objectives they have defined for the business. Keep them involved!

## **THE BIG PICTURE**

There's no doubt that deploying Six Sigma is a lot of hard work. As a Six Sigma Champion, you'll need to assemble and train the *right* people (see Chapter 4), have committed leadership (see Chapter 3), select viable and fruitful projects (see Chapter 5), and integrate metrics for feedback into your business (see Chapter 6). These changes require determination, patience, persuasiveness and the knowledge imparted in this book.

Yes, it's hard work, but Six Sigma done right is also a great deal of fun and brings great reward. You've educated and empowered teams, providing them with resources and direction, so they can delight customers and shareholders. It's a win-win situation. Imagine the pleasure in seeing Black Belts and their teams glow with pride upon project success, and Champions' excitement about current projects only outweighed by their enthusiasm to take on the next. Six Sigma has an immensely

---

## *Six Sigma Deployment*

---

positive impact on professional lives and morale. That hidden reward is sometimes lost when we speak of the customer and shareholder gains from Six Sigma. But it is real, and it is powerful.

Enjoy it!

---