



Process Management International

## ***Use Six Sigma to achieve excellence***

It's nearly 20 years since Motorola started using Six Sigma concepts, and more than 10 since Europe adopted the Excellence Model to support improvement by creating a common assessment methodology.

But the promises have still not really been fulfilled. There's often a nagging feeling that the ongoing performance is not so special, questions as to why Six Sigma doesn't seem to be led by the CEO, why Excellence presentations rarely talk of methods applied.

PMI has been working with some of the world's leading companies in strategic improvement and process variability reduction since 1984. We can help you integrate these two powerful concepts, and use Six Sigma to drive processes to achieve today's targets. To understand how, it's important to acknowledge the realities of what is practised in both programmes.

## **What is Six Sigma?**

Six Sigma, as a target, was created to stimulate dramatic improvements. Any organisation that can run its processes to a six-sigma level, theoretically producing only about 3.4 defects per million opportunities, is a formidable competitor. In fact, just making progress leads to lower costs, better reliability, a better experience for the customers. Many of our clients have experienced just such benefits.

The Six Sigma concept is now mature: the tools and project structures are derived from the methods that the Japanese had accumulated by 1975, the overall programme structure thoroughly developed by PMI since the late 1980s.

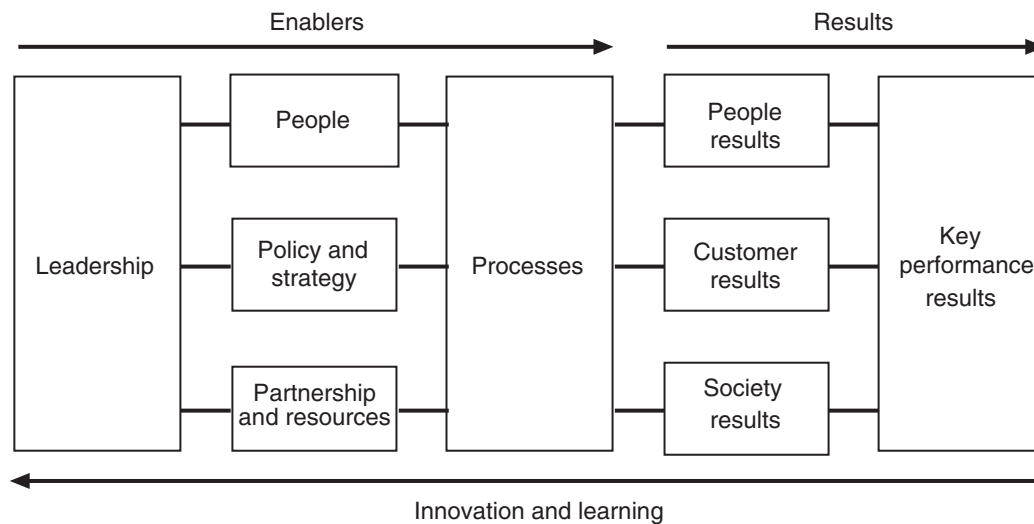
## **How about Six Sigma as often practised?**

Programmes have been successful when actively led by the top managers, manifested by their personal commitment to high profile direction, education, training and support. Where long term success has been limited, some of the following have applied:

- Money saving alone being the driver, losing sight of customers and quality.
- Too much emphasis on problem solving as opposed to system and process improvement.
- Not ensuring that the programme attracts the most promising managers.
- Just getting the training done, people not supported afterwards, and not focused upon important work.
- Training too content driven, concentrating too much on process and statistical techniques, too light on interpersonal skills.
- Programmes missing the human factors of change; not acknowledging it's the politics and feelings in an organisation that will determine successful change.
- Loss of control of multi-project programmes, with benefits unappreciated and people not effectively deployed.
- Only partial use of some of the components, in isolation from the big picture.

## Can the Excellence Model address these shortcomings?

The model enables the assessment of the wider capability and performance of an organisation. It integrates with ideas such as the Balanced Scorecard, helping to draw attention to all critical measures.



In addition, quality management systems, such as ISO 9004, and ISO TS 16949 : 2002 for the automotive sector align with the Excellence model. Line managers can use them as customer driven, process-based, improvement philosophies.

### Living with the excellence model as practised

Many companies have won awards based upon the Excellence Model. But for every improving company using the model to provide a reference point for business transformation there have been many where the efforts peak towards the assessment and fade thereafter.

So an organisation can win a prize but disappoint its customers and owners. Again it's how the leaders drive the improvement process that determines its impact.

### Use Six Sigma methods in every part of the model, to transform the system,

- **Leadership and policy and strategy.** PMI's Six Sigma programme starts with developing the leadership's understanding of the organisation as an operational system—as it interconnects—and in prioritising the efforts towards those processes that are fundamental to performance improvement.
- **Processes.** We use Six Sigma methods to provide the basis for developing an organisation's process management system, through the effective design, production, delivery and servicing of both products and services. This includes:
  - Identifying measures and performance targets.
  - Using results data to prioritise the project efforts.
  - Stimulating the creative and innovative talents of stakeholders in generating improvement, by using a structured approach to learning.
  - Establishing appropriate methods for piloting, implementing and controlling changes.
  - Deploying structured approaches for determining customer needs, and ensuring that customer feedback, including complaints, is valued as information for learning and improvement purposes.

- **Resources, People Management and Satisfaction.** We make sure that the right people are selected and trained, and properly supported in their difficult work.
- **Customer Satisfaction and Impact on Society.** Six sigma projects can be customer and environmentally focused, strengthening the organisation's culture, perhaps addressing Corporate Social Responsibility objectives, as everyone becomes engaged in improvement activities.
- **Business results** The programme's objectives will incorporate strategic change as well as financial goals, whilst our support of the discipline of the improvement project structure maximises the effectiveness of your efforts.

## How PMI can help you

It's no accident that we called ourselves Process Management International back in 1984. We have done what it says on the label: system wide improvement and support services, and training Black Belts or equivalents. We have worked with many of the world's leading companies, we know what the difficulties are, and what success is.

Your Six Sigma, process-based programme with PMI can include:

- Development of a top down strategic support strategy
- Creation of a sound change framework with good 'enabling' processes
- A structured management sponsorship method
- A comprehensive training suite from executives through the organisational structure
- Development of well rounded 'Black Belts' and 'Green Belts' able to influence the change and teach others as well as using the statistical techniques
- A systematic approach to design of new processes as well as a rigorous and consistent approach to improving existing ones
- Continued coaching, support and review.

We believe passionately in the value of our approach, particularly in the integration of tools with the human side. This produces the results that are needed, whilst opening people's minds to constructive and rewarding methods of working together.

Jan Gillett

Chairman  
Process Management International Ltd

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