

Lean Six Sigma in Plain English—Part 4

Organizations of all sizes are cutting costs and boosting productivity and profits with Lean Six Sigma. Not just manufacturing enterprises, either—financial institutions, health care organizations, and service providers of all kinds. Size doesn't matter. Lean Six sigma brings results—even in cases where it's not implemented company-wide. This four-part article is intended to demystify Lean Six Sigma (LSS), and to answer the most frequently asked questions of our firm.

Even though Lean Six Sigma evolved from the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement in the 60's and 70's, it is much more than statistics and tools. LSS is a comprehensive and systematic methodology that is focused on driving financially measurable results. And unlike TQM, you don't have to wait years to save valuable organizational resources. Perhaps this is the greatest difference between the two time tested methodologies.

What steps are there in a typical Lean Six Sigma deployment approach?

Many factors must be considered—the size and structure of the organization, the alignment of business strategy with market needs, the availability of current information from customers, and change inclination. The steps to a deployment approach are:

Conduct Site Evaluation – This would include leadership team readiness assessment, work climate survey, availability of customer loyalty measurement data, cost of nonconformance analysis, strategic planning process, information systems availability, and other competitive realities.

Conduct LSS Strategy Planning/Deployment Sessions – Outputs of these senior level meetings would include the LSS vision and communication strategy, scope of deployment, metrics, timelines, resource allocation strategy, and identification of potential obstacles. The documented deployment plan becomes the LSS blueprint.

Identify and Select the LSS Infrastructure – There are four primary types of resources—Champions, Master Black Belts, Black Belts, and Green Belts. Commitment must come from executive leadership. Initial project selection is also part of this step. Projects need to be linked to key business objectives, drive financially measurable results, and have direct impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Provide Lean Six Sigma Training – Since people, not programs, achieve results, employees need to be trained in the methodology that can improve process capability and reduce variation. Training begins at the executive level. Training the Champions follows. Black Belts and Green Belts are typically trained next, followed by Master Black Belts. LSS awareness training for all other employees is essential to accelerate a culture shift and business transformation.

Ensure Disciplined Implementation/Deployment – Senior managers deploy the plan and are responsible for: project activities, internal and external benchmarking, developing a measurement system, performing project reviews, documenting and communicating results, and on-going review of infrastructure. This step also includes institutionalizing improvements, recognition and renewal. Knowing how to *deploy* versus *delegate* quality management activities is critical to success.

Implementing Lean Six Sigma can be compared with a large ocean-going ship changing course. Considerable force must be exerted—and extreme care must be taken—to ensure that the direction is correct and fully accepted. It must be a practical, effective course that everyone will be motivated to travel.

CMC offers a free consultation for those interested in learning more about [Lean Six Sigma](#) and how it can benefit your organization.

About the Author



Stanley Cherkasky is the Managing Partner of Change Management Consulting, Inc. Founder of the firm, Stan is the principal architect of the *Performance Improvement Breakthrough*[™] methodology, and the *Six Sigma Lean Advantage*[™]—innovative and proven strategies that accelerate ROI and net income improvement, build customer loyalty, and create world-class recognition.

Stan has more than three decades of business and consulting experience, in both the private and public sectors, in the United States and abroad. Stan specializes in building high-performance teams, and working closely with senior leaders to achieve breakthrough financial, organizational, and operating improvement. He has been quoted in many business publications, including Fortune, Business Week and the Wall Street Journal.

About Change Management Consulting, Inc. (CMC)

Founded in 1993, Change Management Consulting is a global management consulting and training company, dedicated to helping organizations of all sizes improve performance, achieve goals and advance leadership capability. As a full-service organizational improvement firm, CMC focuses on organizational and leadership development, compliance management (ISO 9001 and its derivatives), strategic planning and Lean Six Sigma initiatives.

Headquartered in Wayne, NJ with offices in San Diego, Dallas and Detroit, CMC has a proven track record in helping public and private sector clients implement pragmatic continual improvement initiatives that drive financially measurable results. CMC also has extensive experience in obtaining grants and funding assistance for its clients. Learn more at www.cmc-changemanagement.com or contact CMC at (877) 268-2440 or (973) 696-7878.