

SystatS Secrets for Six Sigma Success

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Have you heard the people say, “Six Sigma is just the latest fad”? Well, the fad is now approaching 20 years. At some point most people have come to recognize that there is proven value in the Six Sigma methodology. So why is every company not successful using Six Sigma?

Here are the secrets—the 5 keys to having a successful Six Sigma implementation. We have learned these secrets from experience since, as first generation Six Sigma practitioners, we were there from the beginning—applying Six Sigma in industry and later helping a wide variety of local and international companies implement Six Sigma.

The first key is to have management that is not just committed, but is engaged in Six Sigma. Management has a key role to play to ensure that the right projects are undertaken, the right motivation is supplied to the Black/Green Belts leading teams and the right follow-up actions taken. Without this step many companies find their efforts fade away. At some companies Six Sigma has been launched more often than the space shuttle.

The second key is to select the right projects. This reverts back to having an engaged management, but the project must be suitable for Six Sigma and be aligned with the company goals. Champion training details how management can select winning Six Sigma projects.

The third key is to have the right Black or Green Belt leading the team. Here training can help, but the personality and character of the team leader is a necessary ingredient. The Champion training covers how to select the right individual for leading Six Sigma and how to mentor this person.

The fourth key is to have the right training and consulting expertise. In today’s market many Black Belts are now being used for Six Sigma training. Although some Black Belts develop advanced knowledge and exceptional skill, there is also the danger that 20 days of training for a Black Belt and usage of the tools on a few projects may not be adequate preparation for training. Often this is due to the tendency for the first few projects faced by a Belt to involve less analysis as the low hanging fruits are plucked. For training and consulting, and especially after the low hanging fruits are gone, it is the ability to apply detailed analysis tools and analytical thinking that will make the difference. We believe that since the tools are largely statistical, the best training and consulting will come from those with advanced statistical knowledge and who have heavily used the tools for at least 5 years in industry. After all, from the beginnings of Six Sigma it was the statisticians who developed the methods and trained the Green, Black and even Master Black Belts. More than training, the provider will facilitate coaching/consulting sessions with the Black or Green Belts to guide the project to a successful completion. There is no substitute for experience when guiding projects and motivating Belts.

The final key comes full circle back to management to have the right accountability and reward system in place to sustain the implementation. This can be tricky at times, but we believe that Six Sigma should integrate into a company rather than the company integrate into Six Sigma.

We have offered Six Sigma training/consulting/coaching for over 10 years in Malaysia and internationally as well as using the Six Sigma methodology in industry for over 10 years per consultant. SystatS can help you too in ensuring your Six Sigma success.