

SIX SIGMA - GETTING STARTED

The starting point in gearing up for Six Sigma is to verify if you are ready to embrace a change that says, "There is a better way to run your organization."

Is Six Sigma Right for You?

There are a number of essential questions and facts that you need to consider in making a readiness assessment:

- Is the strategic course clear for the company?
- Is the business healthy enough to meet the expectations of analysts and investors?
- Is there a strong theme or vision for the future of the organization that is well understood and consistently communicated?
- Is the organization good at responding effectively and efficiently to new circumstances?
- Evaluating current overall business results.
- Evaluating how effectively do we focus on and meet customers requirements.
- Evaluating how effectively are we operating.
- How effective are your current improvement and change management systems?
- How well are your cross-functional processes managed?
- What other change efforts or activities might conflict with or support Six Sigma initiative?
- Six Sigma demands investments. If you cannot make a solid case for future or current return, then it may be better to stay away.
- If you already have in place a strong, effective, performance and process improvement offer, then why do you need Six Sigma?

There could be many questions to be answered to have an extensive assessment before deciding if you should go for Six Sigma or not. This may need time and a thorough consultation with Six Sigma Experts to take a better decision.

The Cost of Six Sigma Implementation

Some of the most important Six Sigma budget items can include the following:

- Direct Payroll for the individuals dedicated to the effort full time.
- Indirect Payroll for the time devoted by executives, team members, process owners and others, involved in activities like data gathering and measurement.
- Training and Consultation fee to teach Six Sigma Skills and getting advice on how to make efforts successful.
- Improvement Implementation Cost.

Six Sigma Start-up

Now you have decided to go for Six Sigma. So what is next?

Deploying Six Sigma within an organization is a big step and involves many activities including define, measure, analyze, improve, and control phases. Here are some steps, which are required for an organization at the time of starting Six Sigma implementation.

- **Plan your own route:** There may be many paths to Six Sigma but the best is the one that works for your organization.
- **Define your objective:** It is important to decide what you want to achieve, and priorities are important.
- **Stick to what is feasible:** Set up your plans so that they can match your influences, resources and scope.
- **Preparing Leaders:** They are required to launch and guide the Six Sigma Effort.
- **Creating Six Sigma organization:** This includes preparing Black Belts and other roles and assigning them their responsibilities.
- **Training the organization:** Apart from having black belts, it is required to impart training of Six Sigma to all the employees in the organization.
- **Piloting Six Sigma effort:** Piloting can be applied to any aspect of Six Sigma including solutions derived from process improvement or design redesign projects.

Project Selection for Six Sigma

One of the most difficult challenges in Six Sigma is the selection of the most appropriate problem to attack. There are generally two ways to generate projects:

- **Top-down:** This approach is generally tied to business strategy and is aligned with customer needs. The major weakness is they are too broad in scope to be completed in a timely manner *most six sigma projects are expected to be completed in 3 – 6 months.*
- **Bottom-up:** In this approach, Black Belts choose the projects that are well-suited for the capabilities of teams. A major drawback of this approach is that, projects may not be tied directly to strategic concerns of the management thereby, receiving little support and low recognition from the top.

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