



Defining Six Sigma Projects

By **Tony Jacowski**

Six Sigma projects can be defined as the process through which companies are able to reduce defects and improve the quality of business processes. However, the success of any Six Sigma project depends on a number of factors such as clearly defined objectives, management support and approval, and proper training of Six Sigma teams associated with the project.



For ensuring the success of Six Sigma projects, senior management issues a project charter, which clearly defines the specific goals and objectives of the project. The project charter authorises the project manager to allocate organisational resources for the completion of the project in the stipulated period.

Project Charter

A project charter typically contains a detailed description of business needs that are to be addressed by the project. It lists all the reasons underlying the need for the project, which may include new business opportunities or even new business threats posed from competitors. The charter lists the basic characteristics of the product or service that is to be created during the course of the project based on customer feedbacks and suggestions. The charter explains in detail the process through which the new product or service will help in meeting existing business needs and that of the future.

Problem Statement

The charter also contains the problem statement, which lists the essentialities of the project and enables the project manager to identify the scope of the project and all the related stakeholders. The problem statement acknowledges the complexity of Six Sigma projects and calls for breaking up the whole project into various sub-projects that can easily be executed by Six Sigma teams.

Mission Statement


The project charter contains a mission statement that helps the project team to understand the scope of the project in relation to the larger goals and objectives of the project. The mission statement is described in clear, precise words so that project managers do not make mistakes in understanding its real meaning. The mission statement quantifies the objectives that are to be achieved and does not use vague suggestions such as "reduce customer complaints."

A mission statement related to customer complaints will provide a clear-cut objective such as "reduce customer complaints by 20 percent within the next two months." Defining clear-cut objectives is necessary because it has often been noticed that the project team is unable to make progress in the project due to lack of precise goals or objectives.

Other Essentials of the Mission Statement

The mission statement of a project that aims at reducing defects quantifies the nature of the defect and how important it is in terms of affecting customer behaviour. Such mission statements also call for eliminating the root cause of defects rather than overhauling an existing system or business process. Mission statements are different for different sub-projects and do not overlap each other as this can create a lot of confusing and affect the implementation of the overall project. For clearing confusions regarding the mission statement, project team members can communicate with the project sponsors.

The project charter, containing problem statements and mission statements is very helpful in defining the scope and importance of the Six Sigma project. Just by reading through the document, project managers and team members can get a fair idea about what is to be done and how it is to be done. This will help in successful project implementation, allowing the company to achieve all the aims and objectives associated with the project.

Tony Jacowski is a quality analyst for The MBA Journal. Aveta Solutions - Six Sigma Online www.sixsigmaonline.org  offers online Six Sigma training and certification classes for lean Six Sigma, black belts, green belts, and yellow belts.

© Project Smart 2000-2008. All rights reserved.