

Effectiveness of six sigma essay sample



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When talking about process improvement for a higher quality products and services, Six Sigma is a powerful tool to use. I believe in the effectiveness of Six Sigma in whatever type of company across all industries. Six Sigma can easily be applied in all kinds of business whether it is in the field of manufacturing, healthcare, sales and marketing, engineering or services.

As shown by many companies such as Motorola, General Electric, AlliedSignal, Ford, and Microsoft, following the concept of Six Sigma proves to be effective in making a company save a lot of money from their improved processes. The Six Sigma process in ensuring high quality of products and services that satisfy the customers is an effective way of improving overall business profitability.

Six Sigma is an approach in Total Quality Management (TQM) that most companies now follow. This approach “ institutionalizes a rigorous, disciplined, fact-based way to deliver more money to the bottom line through process improvement and process design projects” (Bertels 3). The end in mind in Six Sigma is total customer satisfaction which in turn lowers down the operational costs and increases the company’s profitability. This way of thinking is what makes Six Sigma an effective method in improving the company’s processes.

Six Sigma is a process that starts with the management. Though, it is more of a procedure of improving product and service quality, the company’s management is the key factor for Six Sigma to be effective in a company. As Eckes said, “ Six Sigma has a strategic component aimed at not only

developing management's commitment to Six Sigma, but their active involvement" (" Six Sigma for Everyone" 16).

Other strategies of improving quality are not as successful as Six Sigma because only the workforce shows an effort in making the changes but not the management. Of all the people in a company, the management team is the one that is most knowledgeable of how the entire business works. So for Six Sigma to be effective, Eckes mentioned that, " it is the responsibility of management to identify the key processes of their organization, measure their effectiveness and efficiency, and initiate improvement of the worst performing processes" (" Six Sigma for Everyone" 17).

In Six Sigma, the company's management team should be the one initiating the changes and plans in improving the processes. With the knowledge in all aspects of the business, management can best strategize the most cost effective way to improve the processes or maybe even design new ones to provide much better outputs with higher quality. This is another reason why Six Sigma is effective. Having a management team that is hands-on with all the business processes encourages and motivates the workforce to also do their part which helps in the overall effectiveness of this strategy.

The concept of Six Sigma focuses on improving processes to produce high quality products and services that meet and exceed customer expectations. For a business to achieve Six Sigma, " a process must not produce more than 3. 4 defects per million opportunities" (" Six Sigma - What is Six Sigma"), where defect means a deviation from what the customers want.

This is like saying customers paying for a cheeseburger without cheese only 3.4 times per one million cheeseburgers sold.

It may seem impossible at first to achieve a 0.00034% fault in any of the business processes. But I believe having that primary goal in mind is what makes Six Sigma effective. Once the management thinks of ways and initiatives to implement in the business to be able to reach this Six Sigma goal, all aspects of the business will now lean towards achieving that goal. Gradually, the number of defects will decrease until it can be as close, if not meet, to the Six Sigma goal of perfection.

Six Sigma involves five different steps that follow the scientific method we used to learn in school. These five steps are define, measure, analyze, improve or design, and control or verify. Having the systematic approach of Six Sigma makes it more desirable to anyone who wants to improve his business. It has been proven, even during our lower or middle school days, that following the scientific method in solving a problem is the most effective way than approaching it unsystematically.

Also, it makes sense to follow these organized steps because it is through these that the business can accurately determine what it needs to improve based on factual information. There may not be immediate results that employees will feel upon implementing Six Sigma, but it is just normal. It may take time before the effects of Six Sigma are realized in a company but it sure is worth the wait. That is why it is recommended to implement Six Sigma in phases starting with only a few, committed people in a team than having everyone in the company involved right away.

Six Sigma's concept can easily be applied to any kind of company belonging to any type of industry. For example, in a computer manufacturing company, Six Sigma can be applied to improve the processes in the assembly line in order to produce high quality computers with good parts as well. If the computer and its parts are of good quality, calls about repairs, defects and complaints are less likely to happen. It means reducing the need for customer service agents who answer those kinds of calls. Also, less rework of parts will be needed as the outputs are mostly of good quality. These things mean reduction in the operational costs of the company, which also means increase in profitability because of satisfied customers.

In the services sector, application of Six Sigma is an effective way to improve the services provided to the customers. In a service business such as Hard Rock Café, customers can give timely feedback to the server in terms of their way of service, the food, how fast they have to wait to be seated and served. With timely feedback, the issues can be addressed right away so customers will be more pleased and satisfied with the service rendered.

Each company or business has its own processes involved in coming up with their outputs whether it be a tangible product or in the form of service. These products and services are the basis of a company's profitability. Six Sigma tactics can definitely be applied to these processes involved to improve the company's outputs and in turn, increase profitability.

Just like any other processes though, there may be some pitfalls when implementing Six Sigma. Eckes stated that, " the problem with Six Sigma is that it is prone to abuse like many other approaches. This is because of the

degree of rigor, discipline and statistics that are used” (“ The Six Sigma Revolution” 243). He also highlighted in his books different concerns that may arise with Six Sigma implementation. However, as long as the Six Sigma tactics are correctly followed and the concept of this approach is fully understood, these mistakes can easily be avoided and the goal of Six Sigma can be achieved.

With all these, I definitely believe in the effectiveness of Six Sigma for any kind of business. The main goal of any company is to stay in business by being highly profitable. And how can a company attain that? It is through achieving a high level of customer satisfaction by providing quality products and services at a lesser cost.

To obtain the high quality of outputs, the processes involved should be effective and have less variations. This lowers the cost of production for the company as there will be less scrap work and re-work of the products. Lower operational costs due to the improved processes, together with an increasing number of highly satisfied customers, means an increase in the company’s profitability, therefore proving the effectiveness of Six Sigma.

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