

SIX REASONS WHY
SIX SIGMA FAILS



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**1. LACK OF VISIBLE
SENIOR LEADER
SPONSORSHIP**

- Do leaders in your organization stay involved after an important initiative is launched?
- When leaders do not consistently demonstrate their sponsorship and commitment, Six Sigma can fall short of expectations.
- As with any critical organizational change effort, Six Sigma requires leaders to stay engaged in the effort. For Six Sigma initiatives to succeed, leaders must reinforce the importance of Six Sigma to their organization in their regular communications and in the ways that they manage their business and people.

2. LACK OF **ALIGNMENT** TO A CLEAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

- Does your organization have a clearly defined strategy?
- Experience shows that Six Sigma is likely to fail if it is not directly linked to the organizational strategy.
- Utilizing a Balanced Scorecard is a best practice associated with Six Sigma implementation. The Scorecard helps to identify and prioritize the Six Sigma improvement projects that will have the greatest impact on strategic objectives and desired business results.
- Organizations should avoid initiating a "collection of projects" that are disconnected from the organizational strategy.

**3. LACK OF PERFORMANCE
TRACKING AND
ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Are people in your organization held accountable for critical projects and results?
- Six Sigma efforts will fail if projects are not managed and tracked aggressively, and the people involved are not held accountable for results.
- Six Sigma is most successful when organizations implement a process for ongoing, regular reviews of projects. These organizations maintain line of sight to the progress, track overall performance, and hold Champions and Teams accountable for timely execution.

**4. FAILURE TO LINK PROJECTS TO
BOTTOM-LINE
IMPACT**

- How well does your organization quantify the expected results for an improvement project?
- Six Sigma is hailed for its bottom-line impact, so if Six Sigma projects are executed without clear financial results, leaders will be disappointed with the efforts.
- The secret to avoiding this problem is to quantify anticipated results before initiating projects, and to ensure they are tightly linked to business unit budgets and the bottom line. It's wise to involve a Finance representative to establish rules and guidelines, and to stay involved in the quantification effort.

**5. INSUFFICIENT OR INEFFECTIVE
ALLOCATION OF
HUMAN
RESOURCES**

- Does your organization have a process for allocating resources for critical projects?
- When organizations do not take a structured approach to how they allocate resources to support their Six Sigma efforts, Six Sigma will probably fail.
- **Did you know?** Successful Six Sigma teams select Black Belt and Green Belt candidates who are process-oriented, have a penchant for data-driven decision-making, and possess a willingness to learn and apply statistical tools.

**5. INSUFFICIENT OR INEFFECTIVE
ALLOCATION OF
HUMAN
RESOURCES**

- **Did you know?**
- To help assure success, effective Six Sigma teams agree on a team structure, realistic resources, and key skill requirements prior to commencing Six Sigma projects.

**5. INSUFFICIENT OR INEFFECTIVE
ALLOCATION OF
HUMAN
RESOURCES**

- **Did you know?**
Organizations can experience success when candidates work on projects that are a natural part of their jobs. Successful teams avoid staffing projects with statistical experts who reside outside the business unit and do not possess intimate knowledge of the process at hand.

**6. OVER-EMPHASIS ON
RIGID APPROACH
AND TECHNICAL TOOLS**

- Does your organization adopt or adapt?
- Six Sigma can fail if an organization places too much emphasis on the mechanics and technical aspects of the methodology.
- Six Sigma is a framework, not a recipe. Paying more attention to the steps than the desired outcome can result in too much bureaucracy and delayed impact.
- It's better to view the approach as a framework with a robust tool set, and then apply the relevant tools to the improvement opportunity!

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SIX SIGMA...
WE LOVE IT, TOO.

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